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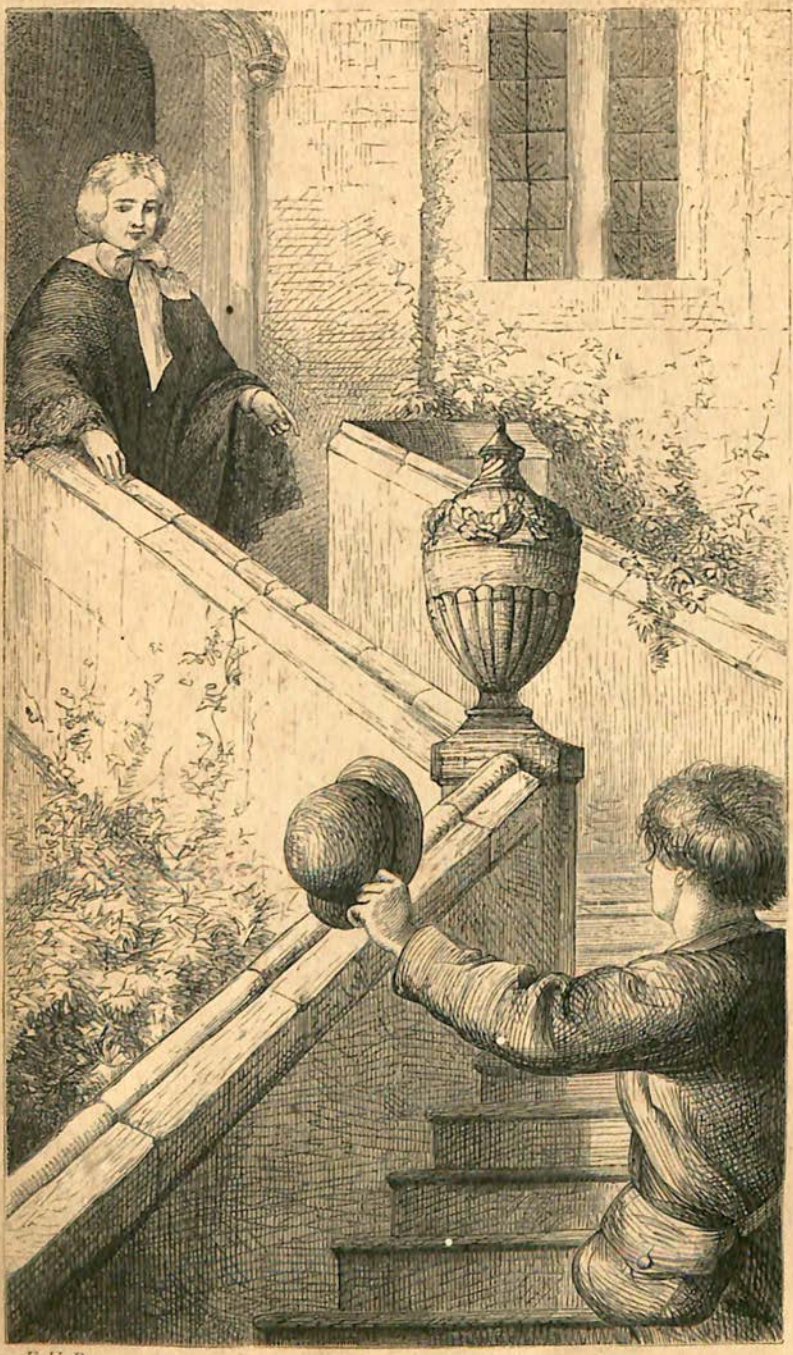
LIFE IN A FRENCH CHÂTEAU.



E.V.B.

"She was dressed in a plain black dress, and her face was illumined by the silver white of her hair."—*Page* 60.

LIFE

IN

A FRENCH CHATEAU.

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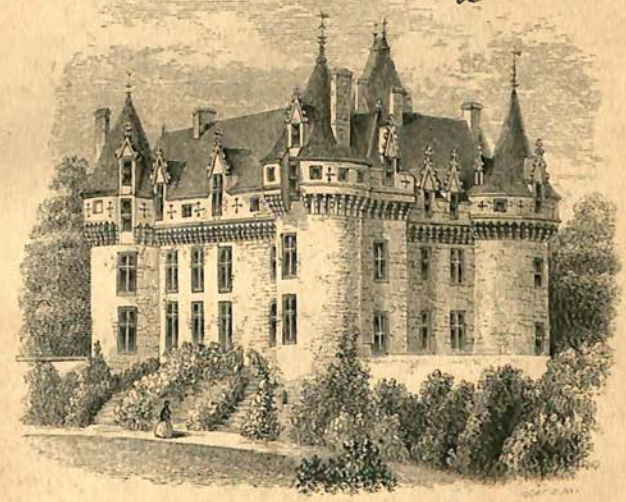

BY

HUBERT E. H. JERNINGHAM.

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To my Mother.

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PREFACE.

IN presenting my readers with this sketch of ways and manners with which many of them are, no doubt, already well acquainted, I must apologise for the apparent want of novelty in the subject. If I had not been encouraged to bring out in the present form the notes which I had merely intended as private records of the pleasant study I had made of the customs of the French of the old régime, during a short stay in one of their strongholds, I should not have presumed to touch upon a matter which has been so often treated by pens far more able than mine.

I have always believed that one can never appreciate a people unless he has lived amongst them, breathed their thoughts, as it were, and fathomed

the secret not only of their national sympathies, but also of those antipathies of race which form the distinctive barriers between countries. Without adopting such a plan it is impossible to obtain a thorough acquaintance with any people whom we are desirous to appreciate at their real value.

In France, perhaps more than in any other country, is such a method necessary to an Englishman. The Frenchman has no strong passions like those of the Spaniard, the Italian, and the German, which at once give a key to the national inclinations and dislikes. So ruled are the virtues and defects of the French by the opinion of the many, the "qu'en dira t'on?" that unless one studies French society in its influence over each particular individual, the task of understanding so subtle a character becomes almost hopeless. In France there have been, and are still, though it is impossible to say how much longer they will remain, two distinct societies, the old and the new—distinct in their manner of thinking and in their

customs, but both equally distinguished by the brilliancy of their conversation, in which respect the French particularly excel.

A four years' preparation for a French academical degree, spent mostly with "la jeune France," in the Quartier Latin at Paris, had made me sufficiently well acquainted with the French language to enter thoroughly into the study I have specified. An old attachment of my family to the once flourishing "Parti Legitimiste," had descended to me as an heirloom, and impressed me with a particular regard for the remaining adherents to the unfortunate Royal Family of Bourbon. In such circumstances I naturally conceived a strong desire to acquire a more intimate knowledge of these people, that I might be better able to form a correct judgment of their merits. When, therefore, I was invited to spend some time in the country home of a Legitimist, I gladly seized so favourable an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with the life, thoughts, and customs of

a class so faithful to the traditions of the past. These notes are the result of my visit.

If this insight into a society to which now-a-days few Englishmen have access, and which, as the Imperial authority becomes more firmly established, is fast disappearing, proves interesting to such as delight in the observation of those phases of life that remind them of other times, my object will have been fully attained.

HUBERT E. H. JERNINGHAM.

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Chapter I.

PORTERS—THE "SEINE" STEAMER—MORAL ELECTRICITY—A STORMY PASSAGE—HAVRE—FRENCH EXCURSIONISTS—HONFLEUR—NOTRE DAME DE GRACE—A REBUKE—CONFIDENCE—REBELLION.

CHAPTER I.

THE morning of the 18th of September 186– saw me comfortably reclining in a first-class carriage of the South-Western Railway *en route* to Southampton, my thoughts on "foreign lands intent." I had received a gracious invitation from La Comtesse de X——, the owner of the beautiful Château du Landin, situate on the banks of the Seine, and thither I was bound on the day in question.

Disposed as I was to indulge very pleasurable feelings and anticipations, and "meditans quid nescio nugarum ac totus in illis," I maintained a temper of serenity which even volumes of dust, clouds of smoke from very indifferent cigars, apparently relished by my travelling companions, and a scorching sun, failed to discompose.

"Non v'è rosa senza spina," is an old axiom of which I shortly experienced the truth; for the weather, which had been most beautiful, changed as my train neared its destination, and evident tokens of a coming storm threw a gloom over my sanguine hopes that the sea would be party to my pleasure. When I reached Southampton it was blowing a perfect hurricane. As usual, on landing, troops of sturdy porters, ready and anxious to start me off for ever from my native land for sixpence, assailed my purse and portmanteaus. Two wretched fellows in particular laid hold of a carpet-bag, and began a most hideous combat who should convey it away. The war was yet raging, when, having with much difficulty extricated the bone of contention from the grasp of the ruffianly beggars, I quietly marched off with the bag on my shoulder. The remainder of my luggage being in charge of the authorities until I reached Havre, I was under no apprehension of similar outrages being committed on the unoffending packages.

I have always held that to study one's travelling companions greatly enhances the charms of a journey undertaken for the sake of amusement; and, as it wanted some three hours before the departure of the steamer, I forthwith began an examination of the little world I was destined to live in for the next twelve hours, as they came to select their berths and settle themselves for the night. The company was rather mixed, but on the whole an entertaining set. To epitomise them individually would be impossible, but to the best of my recollection it consisted of Sir Claudius something, a bluff alderman going to Paris for a month, taking with him his son, a tall bony youth with a visual obliquity; Mr. and Mrs. with an impossible name, two elderly and portly people, with a beautiful little girl called Eliza, whom the mother, with much complacency, styled, for the benefit of every passenger, "the sweetest and genteelest dove that ever breathed bodily breath;" Captain Facing, a tall, gentlemanlike man, somewhat facetious; and a

red-nosed Colonel, whose name savoured of Polish extraction, and who appeared to take a kind of godfather's interest in the above-mentioned "sweet genteel dove." Then there was a sallow-complexioned man with a lobster, whom I denominated "He with a white hat." The lobster was going to Havre to be made a present of—not a bad idea; and also another city of London production, in a very varmint *négligé*, whom I christened "He of Bishopsgate." There were, besides, a tolerable body of individual *vulgus*, semi-gentlemen, menials, male and female, and a bustling active little person with a shrivelled countenance and good manners, who reminded me of Sir Frederic Brashleigh, in that old book, "Sayings and Doings.'

There no doubt exists a moral electric wire which communicates with every individual who treads this earth, and makes each one of us a kind of telegraphic station; for he must be made of a very non-conductive matter who does not discern

the signal which apprizes him of the attention bestowed on him by his fellow-creature—be that creature a friend or a foe, an acquaintance or a stranger. The fact that we rivet our attention, even for the space of a second, on some person, is magnetically made known to that person; and, if the telegram happens to be despatched to a nature sympathetic with our own, the properties of magnetism come into play, attraction ensues; but if the electricity of the recipient be greater than that of the sender, a collision often takes place, and it is needless to observe that collisions of all kind are unpleasant. This appeared to me a sound doctrine, with innumerable exceptions, of course, to prove its force as a rule, when I came in contact with the above-named people. Thus to some I took kindly, because my psychological message had been understood—others, like the Alderman's son, Eliza's papa, and the Captain, proved to have batteries of a too strong electrical nature to be congenial with mine, and the result

was that I hated them on the spot, for no other earthly reason than because I fancied they must dislike me. The little bustling man with the shrivelled face took my fancy most, and with him I spent in pleasant conversation the remaining hour before the time appointed for the departure of our vessel.

At twelve P.M. the "Seine" effected a start, and my fears their realisation; for no sooner had we left the Solent, than we were met by a terrific gale, a pelting rain, and mountainous waves, which, dashing with relentless fury against our little craft, threatened at every moment to break her to atoms, and wash us all ashore along with her wreck. The scene in the cabin was most appalling. What with the moans of the women, the screams of the children, and the piercing shrieks in particular of the "genteel dove, Eliza," the low, guttural sound, which is never heard but at sea, like the voice of distant thunder, in the throat of men, and which, even at that moment,

forcing a classical (?) recollection, caused one to exclaim—

> "Aspice ut undantem prorumpit ad æthera fumum
> Nigrantesque vomens picea caligine nimbos
> Inficit audaci raptum fuligine solem."

I confess I never felt more uncomfortable in my life. Literally speaking, the passage was alternately perpendicular and submarine, according to the waves meeting the ship's head or the ship's sides. Towards eight, A.M., however, the wind abated, the elements became more subdued, and allowed of our entering Havre by 10·30.

It was Sunday morning, and a boat was starting for Honfleur in half an hour, which boat I was most desirous of catching, as it was the only one which would allow of my returning the same evening to Havre. As luck would have it, after waiting twenty minutes at the Custom-house for my luggage—by-the-by, can any one point to a rule in Ethics which decrees that *meum* becomes *tuum*, because it passes from Anglia into Gaul, or

vice versa?—I instituted a search, but without avail, among all my brother passengers' goods, aided by an intelligent Frenchman, who was evidently trying all the while to find out whether "milord" had more money than wits, and was finally disappointed in his expectations; as, suddenly recollecting that one ought always to give in proportion to the standard of the coin in the country in which one is travelling, I remembered that the French standard was lower than our own, and gave what I fairly considered to be sufficient. It was not so, however, for I was informed that he, the porter, preferred to search for nothing than for such a trifle. Oh! wise nation, thought I, that can go to war "pour une idée," and help a distressed foreigner "pour rien!" How superior to our John Bull instincts, which breathe shillings and sixpences from every pore—whereupon I pocketed my money, and being so much the richer, added to my good luck by finding my luggage just as they were unmooring the Hon-

fleur steamer. By dint of running and jumping, I somehow contrived to get on board—not, however, without knocking violently against half a dozen Frenchmen, who very good-humouredly excused my hurry by exclaiming—"Voilà, au moins, un Anglais agile!" So much for French compliments, when, to my knowledge, I must have trod on half a dozen corns, and caused excruciating pain to their unhappy owners.

The passage from Havre to Honfleur, which lasted an hour and a half, is, at times, a particularly disagreeable one, though, on the present occasion, contrasted with that which I had just performed, I found it to be perfectly delightful. Once I had recovered my serenity of temper, which the hurry and annoyance of the last hour had considerably disturbed, I had leisure to look about me and observe what was going on. Never shall I forget the impression which the singularity of the scene around produced on my mind. The wonderful disparity of character which exists be-

tween the French and ourselves, had never struck me so forcibly as on this occasion; and when my first feelings of mute astonishment had given way to others of a more reflective kind, I could not refrain from joining in the prevalent mirth.

The steamer which was conveying us to Honfleur was evidently a Sunday pleasure-boat, in connexion with an excursion train from Paris, organized expressly for the purpose of affording Messieurs les Parisiens an opportunity of breathing the sea air, in pursuance of which object all the excursionists were on their way to Honfleur, which is about as much a sea-bathing place as Southend.

The little craft was nearly crammed full of pleasure-seeking Frenchmen, whose good-humoured jokes and catching hilarity made the voyage one of the most amusing I ever performed. Here were jammed together abbés, soldiers, Jeannes and Jeannetons, all bent on one object—amusement; all talking as if a prize was to be the reward of him

who spoke most and loudest; the women screaming at the top of their voices; the men reassuring them in still louder strains, though of a deeper tone; the abbés continuing their breviaries in the midst of this tumultuous mirth, and, at the end of each psalm, mixing in the general conversation.

"Monsieur l'abbé est bon marin!" bawls out a stupendous gendarme, seated on the left paddle, to a young priest whose attention to heavenly meditations is much disturbed by an uncontrollable desire to bend his head in contemplation of the depths of the ocean.

"Hélas! pas autant que je le voudrais, mon ami," retorts the young churchman, with half a dozen deep yawns, followed by a general laughter from the bystanders.

"Madame, les poissons n'ont pas encore faim," facetiously remarks an unwashed, would-be dandy, to a poor old dame who is morally certain that her last end is at hand.

"Faut bien que quelqu'un les nourrisse, pauvres

bêtes!" wisely exclaims a young woman in gay colours, whose ambition for the last half-hour had been to get into conversation with my foregoing dandy; whereupon loud "Madame a raison!" greet her on all sides; and the lady, by some means or another, contrives to "lier amitié" with the young man she had singled out.

"Veux-tu du sucre, mon bijou?" says a mother to her child, a grown-up lad of fourteen.

"Oui, petite mère," answers this youth, who already looks as if sugar to him would be the extra drop in the cup.

"Monsieur est Anglais?" asks a fat little man, who is relishing the last remains of a cigar, and preparing to enjoy another.

"On le voit bien," remarks his wife, turning her head the other way, as if to prevent my hearing.

"Oui, monsieur," say I.

"Ah!" says he.

"Hum!" I grumble.

"Monsieur parle très bien," observes my friend.

I have not said much to prove it, think I.

"Il y a longtemps que monsieur est en France?"

"Une heure."

"Oh! alors je comprends que monsieur parle bien," continued the little man, not having understood a word of what I had said.

"Seulement une heure, monsieur," I repeat.

"Ah, pardon, je n'avais pas compris."

"Entends tu ça, ma chère," observes the husband to his wife, who now turns her head to listen (as if she had not done so all along).

"Quoi?" whispers she gently.

"Monsieur, qui est Anglais, me dit qu'il n'y a qu'une heure qu'il est en France."

"Pas possible!" replies she of the bashful nature; and the explanation, which evidently I was now going to be called upon to give for the satisfaction of Madame, was happily prevented by the timely announcement of the man at the wheel, who, in a

stentorian voice, bawled out to the company, "la Côte de Grace."

In a moment all conversations ceased, and both my companions' attention and my own was engrossed by the beautiful scenery before us, and by the pleasurable feeling that we had at last reached our journey's end.

As we entered the harbour, one of the most impressive spectacles which can be beheld, presented itself to our view. Along the pier was lined a procession of priests dressed in their white surplices, each holding a lighted taper in his hand; boys with favours round their arms, and little girls in white, were strewing flowers on the pavement, whilst the incense-bearers were perfuming the air with the fumes of incense, as the officiating priest elevated the Sacred Host, and blessed our steamer as she steamed by slowly. All on board knelt in silent adoration; and even those who were not Catholics could not refrain from bowing their heads respectfully, struck mute,

as it were, by the majesty and sublimity of the occasion. A moment after, the engines stopped, the boat was made fast, and its living cargo was on the road to enjoyment. Love of pleasure had regained its empire.

Honfleur, once an important town before the construction of its successful rival Havre, is now but a dingy hole, with a few redeeming points. To the name of town it claims a right, which perhaps the addition of a railway-station has now sanctioned—though certainly, to my mind, huts ought never to be styled houses, slums streets, or wood-built chapels churches, and the whole combined, a town, when it barely deserves the appellation of village.

The population, which, in the seventeenth century, consisted of about 15,000 people, barely amounts to 9,000 now. The fact that, in more prosperous times, large squadrons have issued from Honfleur harbour can scarcely be credited when one beholds the existing state of that harbour, a

mere refuge, inaccessible to vessels of any considerable tonnage, the entrance to which is obstructed by a shifting and dangerous sand-bank.

On landing, I at once made for Grace, which is one of the most enchanting spots in the world. The road which leads to it is about a quarter of a mile in length, broad, and bordered on one side by a rock, and on the other by a sloping hill studded with trees, the thick foliage of which only at times allow one to perceive the winding pathway which leads to the shore, and in the distance the calm surface of the sea.

On reaching the summit of "la Colline de Grace," the most beautiful panorama that can be conceived breaks upon the view. On the left stands lonely, mysteriously, and inviting curiosity, a little chapel without outward or inward architecture to commend its merit, or any remains of ancient grandeur to raise the interest which it creates; but appealing most feelingly to that innate sense of

religion extant, though often dormant, in the bosom of every man.

Here one feels that religious faith has shed a lustre which no philosophical scepticism can darken; and without analysing the motives which have called forth the demonstrations of this faith, it is impossible not to admire the sense of gratitude which has prompted generations of men to come and proclaim, by their humble exvotos, their gratitude to heaven for what they considered miraculous preservation.

Those who are not Catholics may smile at the apparent ignorance of sailors, who, in the hour of danger, appeal for help, with childlike confidence, to the mother of God, whom they have been taught to look upon as the mother of all; but there is a poetry in their thought, there is a beauty in the filial confidence which prompts their appeal, and a feeling expression of the heart in the mode in which they evince their gratitude, that not the most irreligious can deny.

On the right of this little chapel, so lonely and so picturesque, is a platform, whence a most beautiful view presents itself to the eye. Those whose inclinations do not lead them to the chapel, find here their great attraction; and certainly, on a fine summer's morning, nothing can exceed the charms of this enchanted spot. To gaze, whilst reclining softly on the green turf around one, upon the far-distant turrets of Havre, which, brightened up by the rays of a glorious sun, appear like a forest of snow-white sails, is to experience a new delight, an unknown pleasure, with which one only becomes acquainted on reaching this place. The quiet around,—the delicious sea breeze blowing gently in the foliage of the trees,—the picturesque appearance of "les paysannes Normandes," performing silently and reverently their pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Grace,—the seeming perfume of holiness with which the atmosphere was impregnated, all contributed to mark the hour I spent in that hallowed land as one of the happiest of my life.

How distressed I felt when the time had come that I was to tear myself away from this little Eden, none but those who have experienced the delights which nature affords to her admirers can possibly understand. I felt more than grieved; and often since, when my thoughts have recurred to that hour, I have experienced the truth of the poet's saying,

> "Memory draws from delight, ere it dies,
> An essence which breathes of it many a year."

But such is life—we are never allowed to enjoy anything long, and, agreeably to the dictates of Fate, I reluctantly resumed my journey back to the steamer, though by another way than that which I had previously taken. On reaching the other side of the hill, a sight of less beauty, though of equal interest, again charmed my view. The whole of the little town of Honfleur displayed itself to my admiring observation. Built in a valley, it is accessible by land by a large sloping

road, called la Route d'Orléans, which was built by Philippe Egalité. From the top of this road, at about a mile from the town, a most pleasing and curious picture meets the eye.

One is puzzled at first to make out the meaning of the white serpent, which, to all appearance, forms the ground of the painting. On advancing, this problem becomes still more complicated by the watery appearance of the creeping reptile which imagination has portrayed. A step further throws a light upon the enigma, and, when half a mile from the town, the veil which covered the mystery drops, and the Seine, "dans ses replis tortueux," presents itself as a barrier between the two rival departments,—"la Seine Inferieure" and "le Calvados." The two solitary towers of Honfleur town, and the masts of the few ships in her harbour, display themselves then to view, and add a lustre by giving life to a most beautiful tableau.

When I reached the pier the last bell was being rung, steam was up, and the captain, a fat, un-

washed little man, enveloped in a cloud of smoke from his own cigar, was busy on the bridge, giving orders for the non-admittance of any more passengers, and the departure of his ill-built craft. Being refused admittance, I endeavoured, in my recklessness, to jump on board, when I was at once pulled by half a dozen men from behind, and greeted with a salvo of "à bas les Anglais" from before; expressions of pity, disgust, disdain, and anger on both sides. Under these circumstances, what could I do? Could I, in a calm and dispassionate manner, look upon the fact that this was actually the last boat that returned to Havre that day? Was I to put up at Honfleur, whilst my luggage, which I had left at Havre, might, for all I knew, be put up to auction as belonging to a person unknown? Could I possibly resign myself with patience to Fate? Never! So with that instinct of invention which is the companion of necessity,—as the French have it, "nécessité invente,"—I addressed a meeting of be-

wildered-looking Frenchmen; and, as well as I could express myself, pointed out to them the fact —which they all knew—that we had lost our last chance of steaming back to Havre; but, as sails had been in use before that powerful *motor* steam, I proposed paying a compulsory tribute to the past, and snubbing the present, by sailing back to the native place of Bernardin de St. Pierre. I appealed to all the Pauls present to take care of their Virginies, and singling out a young distressed damsel who had lost her beloved by becoming separated from him, I asked her, in the politest manner, to allow me to show the way under her auspices.

This harangue had its effect. A score of bawling boatmen immediately proffered their services, and the expedition having been confided to my care, I chose a fishing-craft which appeared less rickety than the rest, saw the whole of my trust safe in, and took my post at the helm. The implicit confidence with which these Parisians fa-

voured me, I took as a compliment to the widespread and acknowledged reputation of the English as sailors, one and all. For once I was captain of a ship—for once and the last time, if Frenchmen are to be my future crew.

No sooner had I steered clear of the harbour, amidst the shouts of "Bon voyage!" "Adieu!" "Nous dirons le *de profundis*," "Au revoir dans l'autre monde," than my crew insisted that, because I was tacking to port, I was actually steering them wrong, and intended to take them all to England.

This joke, which was intended as such by the lively youngsters around, was taken "au sérieux" by the elderly females of the party, and they insisted upon my relinquishing the post of honour which they had a moment before so generously conceded. This I positively refused; and, as I was not altogether ignorant of French, I got into an animated discussion with my foregoing old dames—a discussion which was not in any way

calculated to calm their fears, since I informed them, in most positive terms, that if they persisted in their annoying discourses, they would finish by bullying me into doing precisely what they were accusing me of, and that I should do so without remorse. This sally divided the crew into two camps; the old women were furious, and, I declare, I am not prepared to say which is worse, an old French lady in a passion, or an English one.

A young Frenchman is a tease all the world over, if by teasing he can amuse that indispensable article to a Frenchman's life, "sa maitresse." This I knew to be the case, and, therefore, appealed to the fair sex by dint of signs and other mute conversational methods, in order that I might have their support in this trial of patience. This was granted, and, of course, the men became tamed, and sided with me.

The battle of the giants began by a peremptory order from the eldest of the party to return to Honfleur forthwith. This motion was seconded

by the second eldest, and supported by the two others who formed the chorus. My reply was a compliance with their request, and the result was a division in the opposite camp, who had never intended what they proposed.

Such an uproar as followed I shall not forget; the most intelligible terms employed being, "parbleu," "corbleu," "morbleu," "pristi," "sapristi," "fichu," and "Anglais." All talking as Frenchmen alone can talk when they are excited, and all knocking one against the other; all angry, and yet at different times interspersing their expressions of rage with roars of laughter. I was actually steering back, when the younger party would not stand it any longer, and proclaimed boldly that "Si madame ne cesse pas de gueuler, ils la feront dégueuler." This silenced the old parties, and rather than "dégueuler," they preferred the other alternative.

Peace being restored, we resumed our course, and in a few minutes I had the satisfaction of seeing twenty foreigners sea-sick, all of whom, I am

happy to say, reached Havre, notwithstanding, in time to rejoin their friends, catch the return excursion-train, and leave me to meditate over a well-cooked beef-steak, "aux pommes de terre," at the Hôtel de l'Europe, upon the events of the day.

At eight I got into the train for Rouen, resolving to see Havre in detail on my return; and, after dreaming over and over again that I had arrived, and being seized with a violent temptation to jump out of my carriage, and help the speed of the train by pushing from behind, I did reach the capital of Normandy at a late hour, and sought shelter for the night at the Hôtel d'Albion, on the Quai Boieldieu.

Chapter II.

NEW DELIGHT—BRITISH PECULIARITIES—THE VICAIRE OF S. OUEN—AN OMELETTE—ROUEN—ONWARD—LA BOUILLE—TWO FRENCHMEN SOLD—ROBERT LE DIABLE-DILIGENCE—BOURG ACHARD—MDLLE. STÉPHANIE—LE LANDIN—SOAP—OLD LEGITIMISTS.

CHAPTER II.

AS soon as the first rays of day had pierced my curtains, up I jumped, and ran to the window to gaze on the picturesque quay before me. I am not aware that there is a more delightful position than to be shut up in the folds of a comfortable dressing-gown; to bring the knees on a level with the chest, whilst the feet are gently caught by both the hands, and thus to gaze on a fine prospect of nature. The admiration breathed in from the exterior seems to communicate itself to the whole of the body like an electric fluid, which, acting as a loadstone, nails one to one place. The mind is freshened up by the sight, and becomes absorbed in pensive mood; the silence of the morning, the greyish hue with which all is

tinted, the twittering of the birds not yet formed into a song—the whole exercises a spell which only disappears when day has completely awoke. That instant the hands leave their hold, the knees their position, the mind its meditation, the loadstone its attraction—man thinks of himself again, and happiness is o'er.

The moment I heard the voices of men and women heralding in every tone the approach of either animal or vegetable goods, I remembered the line,

"Surgite, jam vendit pueris jentaculum pistos,"

and became awake to a sense of my situation.

I looked at my watch, and found it was time to dress, and rang the bell; having previously cast a searching glance at the washing apparatus, the sight of which, though I had no reason to complain considering what I subsequently saw, I must confess was by no means invigorating to one who, like myself, looked forward to his tub as the means of refreshing his wearied limbs, his worn-out con-

stitution, and his sleepless countenance—for, whether excitement or fatigue, I had not been able to shut my eyes the whole of the night.

Nothing proves more forcibly how subject we are to the rule of nature, than the impossibility we experience at times to court her favours with success. She withdraws them at her will, and against that will no human efforts can avail. This mortifying truth I noted on the present occasion, when I vainly battled with nature for a moment's oblivion of her existence.

"A bath!" I cried, when my bell was answered.

"Ils ne sont pas encore ouverts," was the reply.

"What do you mean by the baths not being open?" I rejoined. "Can't I have a bath by myself, or must I wait until somebody else has finished?"

"Oh! Monsieur, veut un bain particulier,—il n'en trouvera pas de si matin."

The man must be a fool, I thought, not to un-

derstand me; so I repeated my request in plainer words, and soon found out that this faithful waiter had purposely avoided answering my demand, not wishing to bring himself to the avowal that such a thing as a bath was not to be had in the house. On my insisting, however, upon having something in the shape of a tub, a kitchen bucket was brought me, and I was politely informed that my bath was ready, "dans le cabinet à toilette de Monsieur;" the dressing-room being, in reality, a kind of cupboard without shelves.

I made the best of a bad affair, and forgave all past offences, when, sitting down to breakfast, I found myself opposite a delicious "café au lait," a French roll, and a beef-steak "aux pommes de terre."

They say the Latins

"Colloquiis fractas reparant post prandia vires;"

and having done justice to the best coffee ever put before me since the day when I had last visited

France, I thought an exchange of ideas with a countryman, a stout little man in a grey suit, a grey hat by his side, and yellow dogskin gloves, which savoured of six months' hard wearing, lying on the table near him, and who appeared to be half buried in his cup, would materially help my digestion, and contribute to enhance the inward pleasure in which I was exulting.

How strange it is that pleasure increases by communication, whilst pain in most cases decreases by a similar proceeding! So I volunteered some remark on the superiority of the French manner of making coffee over ours, which was the more singular that the distance which separated the two countries was so insignificant, and the interchange of communication so constant.—No reply.

"Don't you think so?" I again volunteered, somewhat put out that my attempt at being civil was thus frustrated.

"Do you speak to me?" was the response, in a

tone which admitted of no misunderstanding as to the silence which I had better observe if I wished to avoid a more significant snub.

"I beg your pardon," was my only answer, and forthwith the reserve of this man became food for reflection.

How striking, how little attractive is that innate reserve and sullenness so peculiar to Englishmen, in which we, as it were, entrench ourselves against every possibility of extending our acquaintance with our fellow-creatures, by any other than the formally accredited medium of personal presentation. And, indeed, until that presentation has taken place, how forbidding and mistrustful is our demeanour one with the other! Upon a stranger with whom casual circumstances may have brought us in close propinquity, how apt are we to look, and be looked at in turn by him, as if each had a design upon the other's pocket. Month after month do we not sometimes find ourselves in the almost daily habit, as at our clubs, of en-

countering persons whom, to use a common phrase, we well know by sight—that is to say, their names, standing, respectability, character, talents, and social qualities may be perfectly well known to us —ourselves, and all unto us relating, being, perhaps, equally familiar to them; yet the ice-cold code of English haughtiness, of that which the French so justly style "la morgue Britannique," forbids us to exchange one syllable of the most ordinary greeting, because a third person has not had the opportunity of reciting in our conjoined presence the requisite form of words for making us acquainted.

I remember once sitting at dinner over a solitary mutton-chop at the "St. James'," when a gentleman, similarly employed at an immediately adjoining table, called out, "Waiter, bring me half a pint of sherry!": "And me too!" was my mechanical exclamation, when I chanced to encounter the angry glance of the first speaker directed upon me with an expression of injured pride, as though I

had been guilty of some gross personal impertinence. In my neighbour's ostimation, I had doubtless incurred that guilt by presuming to husband, as it were, our parts of speech, and partly include the attainment of my own purpose within the terms of his particular mandate.

To be just, however, it must be allowed that abroad a certain amount of diffidence is absolutely requisite; for Englishmen abroad are not like Englishmen at home. Here each is placed in his proper rank and station by people jealous of all encroachments on their rights and power; there, the innate spirit of independence and command is freely indulged, and John Bull towers as much as he is submissive at home. But I find myself indulging in thoughts immaterial to my object, and letting the reader perceive what I wished to avoid, viz., that the reservedness of my "compagnon de table" had considerably hurt me.

By way of consolation, I called for the waiter.

A rule I would wish to lay down to all Englishmen is; when snubbed at a café or a table-d'hôte abroad, pocket the affront, call for the "garçon d'hôtel," and get into conversation with him.

A most intelligent race that of the French "garçons d'hôtel!" They prove the somewhat anomalous principle that idleness and activity can be co-existing, and illustrate powerfully the presence in the mental world of a kind of surreptitious intellect, which is wholly instinctive and might be termed "inverted," since it proceeds far more from the feet and hands than from the brain.

Breakfast over, I started on a visit to the Abbé L——, for whom I had a letter of introduction, and met him at the door of his house, on his return from saying mass at St. Ouen. He greeted me cordially, and entreated that I should partake of "the humble fare," as he denominated the sumptuous meal which had been laid out for him by his niece, who acted to him in the capacity of a servant.

"La nièce du curé," a most invaluable member of the great social world in France, is one of France's oldest foundations, and one of the most respectable and traditional institutions in the country. In the present instance, I found her to be a very pretty, lively girl, with a most captivating smile, and a very modest manner.

"Mais j'ai déjà déjeûné, Monsieur l'Abbé," I remarked to the "vicaire's" pressing solicitations.

"Qu'importe," he replied; "quand on voyage on a toujours faim."

I believed him, and, though I blush to say it, I sat down with an appetite which, to any witness of my first breakfast, would simply have appeared incredible, to attack, in military fashion, an "omelette aux fines herbes," which, even at this distance of time, haunts me as the most perfect dish that ever was placed before me. I have no doubt tasted greater achievements of culinary art, and equally well-cooked omelettes, but my imagination always dwells on the bright yellow

colour, and occasional streaks of green herb, evaporating, as it were, in the smoke which issued from the omelette, as Marie served it up with a radiant look at her uncle—a look which meant that vanity and the desire to please were battling within her for supremacy. Oh! that omelette! how often have I asked at the club for such a one, but in vain!—how often have I sighed for a Marie to "dish it up," but in vain!—how often that genuine expression of simplicity and intelligence, of affectionate tenderness and youthful solicitude, which was depicted in her countenance, has recurred to my mind, and how often have I regretted that I had not the talent of a Millais, or of that charming artist, E.V.B., to perpetuate on parchment the look of happiness radiant on Marie's face.

The Abbé did everything in his power to be agreeable to me, and offered to show me over all the monuments and churches of the town. This I readily accepted; on the trite principle that no

good offer should ever be refused, and off we started for St. Ouen.

As most of my readers have visited the old and noble capital of Normandy, with its incomparable churches, I shall abstain from giving a detailed description of each, for fear of proving tedious, and content myself by reminding the few who have never been to Rouen, that the antiquity of this town can be gathered from the fact that it was already well known in the second century; and that, irrespectively of the "murder" of Joan of Arc, Rouen has more than one historical claim to celebrity and interest. In point of picturesque position, few other cities can vie with this town, most agreeably situated as it is on the right bank of the Seine, in a valley surrounded on all sides by a chain of mountains. It claims some right to be called maritime, but a doubtful one, notwithstanding Bishop Fortunatus's saying,

> "Pervenit qua se piscoso Sequana fluctu
> In mare fert juncto Rotomagense sinu."

After visiting St. Ouen, the most ancient abbey in Normandy, and having admired again and again the splendid proportions of this noble church, completed, as my Abbé told me, at four distinct periods, we proceeded to the cathedral, which is less imposing, but not less interesting from its antiquity. One of the towers of the cathedral deserves a particular mention—it was formerly called "La Tour de Beurre," because it was built with the alms given by the faithful to the clergy for permission to eat butter during Lent. It was afterwards called the "Georges d'Amboise," on account of its having contained the famous bell of that name, which, in 1793, was pulled down and converted into cannons. If allowable, one might almost commit oneself to a pun in this instance. What formerly called the canons to their prayers, now cannons them away. A few medals were struck from fragments of this famous bell, and on one side of them was inserted the following:—

"Monument de vanité,
Détruit pour l'utilité,
L'an deux de l'Egalité."

Reader, grant that I am generous not to indulge in a digression on the various painful and instructive thoughts which the above brings to the mind, calling a bell a "monument de vanité;" calling a gun a useful instrument; and "l'an deux del' Egalité," reminding one of that fearful social revolution which has never had, nor can perhaps ever have again, its equal.—Say, reader, if not only generous, I am not equally unselfish in foregoing for your sakes a few remarks on so mournful an epitaph.

St. Maclou, St. Patrice, St. Romain, were the next objects of our admiration; for the Abbé seemed to take as much delight in showing me the pride of his native town, as I experienced in visiting them. We at last came to the Protestant church, which my poor priest looked at with regret. In this church there is a well, now closed, but

which formerly used to yield a great deal of water. A pail was fastened to a thick cable, and thence was derived a proverb much in use with the Rouen people—

"Il est froid comme la corde du puits de St. Eloi."

To how many of our English belles would not this proverb apply most appropriately.

We then stepped into the yard of l'Hôtel de Bourgtheroude, to admire the splendid *bassi rilievi* representing the interview between Francis II. and Henry VIII., and others of a less historical but not less interesting character. It was here that Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, lodged when, sent by Elizabeth, he renewed the alliance between the two kingdoms, and presented Henry IV. with the Order of the Garter. It is now occupied by merchants. "O fallacem hominum spem!" was it ever intended that these works of art should serve to decorate the workshops of some

wealthy tradesman?—was it ever hoped by the proud old Norman kings that Rouen should become a third-rate city, and the standing proof of their defeat?

One more monument, and I shall say good-bye to Rouen for the present. I allude to the shabby column which France, "dans sa tardive reconnaissance," has erected to Joan of Arc, who, whether by divine or foul means, saved her country from the foreign yoke, and deserved, at the hands of her countrymen, an adequate tribute of gratitude, whatever wrath and lasting enmity she may have created in her enemies.

The boat for La Bouille was to start at four, and it was near that time when the Abbé and myself were still lamenting over the absence of any fine monument to perpetuate the great achievements of "la vierge de Vancouleurs." I, therefore, tore myself away from this excellent man, and having called for my luggage at the hotel, I was just in time to catch the steamer, an extraordi-

nary built craft, something in the shape of a Noah's ark; with all the accommodation, however, of an 186– A 1.

There were few people on board, but I soon discovered two gentlemen of very prepossessing appearance, with whom I hoped to get into conversation, feeling sure that their information would prove valuable. I was, however, mistaken, as neither one nor the other deigned to reply to my questions by more than a short monosyllable, and evinced a particular dislike to my persisting in asking them questions which they were not willing to answer. I therefore desisted, not, however, without regret, because I had, by their reserve, nearly destroyed two deep-rooted notions, and received my first disappointment. I had hitherto been convinced that sympathy is never single-sided, and that travellers are always gratified when they thirst for knowledge, especially in France.

Thinking over the rebuke I had received, I re-

membered having been told, a short time before, of an American, who, travelling like myself, for the sake of information, asked a carriage companion, when nearing Amiens, what place that was, and was met by the usual negative—"I don't know." With true Yankee perseverance and want of tact, he repeated the question—"Sir, I asked you what that place was?" "Sir, I told you I didn't know." "Why, sir, I guess you know that I came on the Continent to learn?" "Did you, sir? Well, then, d—n it, I never came on the Continent to teach!"

A saucy reply, which, given by an Englishman to a Yankee intruder, was excusable, but which would not have been compatible with French politeness. The effect of my meditation was, therefore, to convince me that the French were losing much of their traditional courtesy, and to make me seek elsewhere the pleasure which I had anticipated.

I made a second round, and perceived a pretty

little Normande reading some book, which I took to be one of Dickens's novels. What an opportunity! I seized it on the spot, and asked her whether she spoke English, since she was able to understand our writers; and what was my delight when a clear silvery voice issued from the prettiest little mouth, varying its tones most charmingly, as it passed between a set of the whitest teeth I have ever seen, even in England,—informed me that she spoke English—she had been in England two years as a governess in Lord ——'s family, and was now returning to her own home—she loved the English, but not their country—she had been most kindly treated, and if she could be of use to any Monsieur John Bull (this was said with a smile), it would be, to her, the greatest of pleasures.

I was too charmed, and told her that, with true English sincerity, I should take her at her word, and trouble her all the way to La Bouille, whither I was bound, with questions about the

surrounding country. Whereupon, pointing to the opposite side, she said:

"Do you see that pretty village at the foot of the hill? That's Grand-Quevilly, a place where my father used to possess some property in former and happier times, and which is very ancient indeed. Thirty years before Rollo took Normandy, its existence was already known, and in 1160, Henry II., King of England, and Duke of Normandy, had a Royal Manor there, which was afterwards converted into a hospital for lepers, but which, with the exception of the church of St. Julien, is now destroyed, as almost all our national traditions have been. The church is of the twelfth century; it was annexed to the priory of the Madeleine at Rouen in 1366, by Charles V., and was in 1667 ceded to the monks of La Trappe. Its architecture is one of the most curious and most interesting specimens of the 'plein cintre' in the neighbourhood of Rouen, but it will soon disappear; it is now used as the granary of some wealthy farmer."

I had hardly thanked her for the voluntary description of this place, when, turning round sharply and coquettishly, she remarked,

"Don't be too hasty in the expression of your gratitude; wait until you have something to thank me for; look about and admire, for I take it you have few places in England which can vie in beauty with this part of our beloved Normandy. Look there—there's Val-de-la-Haye, between this river and the 'Forêt de Roumard.' King Rollo was very fond of hunting in this neighbourhood, which, being infested by robbers, was reputed very dangerous. To put an end to this state of things, he resolved to hang the first thief that should be caught; and, to throw temptation in their way, he suspended a number of gold bracelets to a tree. These were never touched for three years, so great was the fear King Rollo inspired, and the place where they hung is to this day called 'La Mare de Rollo.' There's a pretty story for you, *à la* King Alfred."

"Grand-Couronne!" was bawled out by the man at the hatchways; whereupon I gave a start, and my dear little Normande inquired most affectionately whether I was going to visit the haunts of the Druids.

I asked her what she meant, and she then informed me that at the back of Grand-Couronne is the forest of Rouvray, where the Druids were wont to celebrate their mysteries.

Another half-hour passed away most pleasantly, thanks to the lively sallies, clever remarks, and engaging manners of the little governess, when the engines were stopped, and I was informed that the particularly pretty and romantic-looking little town before me was La Bouille.

I parted with Mademoiselle —— with very great regret, but with the hope of meeting her again—she being bound for Duclair, a place to which I paid many subsequent visits, more inspired, I suspect, with the wish of seeing her than of visiting the curiosities of its environs.

I misnamed La Bouille a town—I ought to have called it a village of some importance, near the forest of La Londe, and at the foot of a perpendicular rock, on the crest of which are still to be seen some ruins (if a few stones deserve that appellation) of the castle which tradition has assigned to Robert le Diable. Built by the Dukes of Normandy to defend the passage of the Seine, this castle was admirably situated; but what remains of it, like its history, is something vague, which recalls merely a few wonderful events. No historical souvenir attaches to the topography of this strange monument; a chronicle, an opera, a fable, the sayings of a few old men, and of a few shepherds—such are the only authorities which connect it with the past.

Who was Robert le Diable?—a question which might be put to "Notes and Queries," and the answer to which would be certainly fraught with interest.

In the unreliable annals of the Middle Ages,

Robert le Diable is said to have been the son of an old governor of Neustria, the first Duke of Normandy, celebrated for his adventurous exploits and disorderly passions, and to have lived in the eighth century; but three hundred years afterwards we find Robert the Magnificent, father of the Conqueror, called Robert le Diable, although he was "benign and amiable to his friends,"—"benin et doux à ses amis."

Several historians maintain that it was on leaving this castle that John Lackland proceeded to murder his nephew, Arthur of Britanny; but all agree that he caused it to be pulled down at the time when Philippe Auguste united Normandy to France.

With these thoughts the reader may conceive that I gazed with particular interest on the stones covered with moss and ivy which formed the foundation of this old feudal castle; and while my imagination rebuilt in a moment the dungeons, the halls, the state-rooms, where so many scenes of interest

had passed in years gone by, my pleasure was trebled.

The wind at the time had risen, and was whistling through the leaves. A cold blast, the coldness of the coming dusk, made one involuntarily shiver, and, by the force of association, the tones of the wind became the music of Meyerbeer, and the blast that of the graves from which the nuns arise and dance the dance of death.

My reverie was soon disturbed by the bellowing of the postillons.

"Est-ce que monsieur est le monsieur pour qui le coupé a été engagé?".

"Yes, yes," I cried, and at once stepped into the coupé, which is the fore part of the Diligence, and had the satisfaction of seeing the two gentlemen, who, fortunately for me, as circumstances turned out, had refused to speak to me on board the steamer, cast several envious looks towards the comfortable seat which had been secured for me by my friends.

The Diligence into which I got, a lumbering ponderous machine, was dragged by five Norman "bidets," with bells and rope harness, and dusty carcases, driven with great steadiness and skill by a postillon, whose every other word was an oath.

The ascent of the coast is particularly steep, but the scenery which right and left breaks on the view surpasses description. The sun was beginning to set, and all around was tinted with a reddish hue, as a parting compliment to the great orb from which nature derives her splendour, and the wildness of the scenery, enhanced by the whistling of an easterly wind, rendered the whole spectacle one of the grandest of the numerous grand sights I had seen already, and was still destined to behold. I found myself jumping about on my seat from one window to another in admiration of all I saw, and giving expression, in a most uncontrollable manner, to the delight which filled my inmost soul.

After toiling and laboûring hard, our horses

reached the top, and all of a sudden I found myself in the flattest and most uninteresting country imaginable—very like the proverbially dull country which lies between Calais and Paris, between Ostend and Ghent, and between London and Cambridge. Off we went at full speed on one of those interminable roads which the French so admire, but which travellers find to be the most monotonous in existence. An inn, or, rather, the thirst of our conductor, stopped our progress. He most politely asked me whether "le monsieur du coupé" would like "a goutte." I declined, but begged of him to take one for my sake, which he at once did with great complacency. A few minutes after the machine was again in motion, and six o'clock struck as the postillon's whip cracked, and the horses galloped into Bourg-Achard, at the principal inn of which the Diligence stopped, and I found my friend, La Comtesse S. de C——, awaiting my arrival. "Elle avait coiffé Ste. Catherine," which means that,

though unmarried, she had acquired a married woman's independence. She had, therefore, come in person to greet me, and nothing could be more gracious than her reception.

"At last," she said, "we have an opportunity of showing you some of the civility which your family has at all times earned a right to expect from ours! At last I shall be able to show you some of the beauties of our 'belle Normandie,' and I thank you for coming!"

"Thank me for coming!" I replied—"why, it is my duty to thank you for inviting me, and at such a delightful time of the year, too. If all that is to come is half as charming as that which has taken place on my way here, I shall esteem myself the happiest man that ever stepped on earth."

At this juncture I found myself at the door of an elegant brougham, worthy of Manson and Laurie's make; and in a few moments more Stéphanie—for such is the name I shall in future designate my friend by, and I—we were letting the

world "jog along as it would"—plunged into most intimate conversation about common acquaintances, and things that had passed since last we had met in Paris. The drive was soon at an end.

"Here is the Landin!" cried my friend—"not such a pretty place as those which you English have in your country, but a comfortable home, as, I trust, you will find it."

As she said this, we passed the "loge du concierge," a clean, neat little house, at the door of which stood a fat old woman with a high cap, the two flaps of which stood erect on each side of her cheek; a gown which might have been let down six inches without inconvenience to the wearer; and an apron which might have been white at some period of its existence, but had taken the colour of the onions that must have been profusely pealed over it.

"Voilà mon ami Anglais, Madame Michaud," cried Stéphanie as we passed; but Madame Michaud's words in reply were lost in the noise

of the wheels of the carriage as they rattled along the gravelled pathway which led to the mansion.

As the carriage stopped, the old Comtesse de C— came to the hall to receive me, and her singular affability, her high-born look, her noble deportment, the grace of her manner as she gave me her hand to kiss, the dignity of her aged countenance, will never be effaced from my memory. Standing there, at the door of her castle, to greet a friend, a link between the history of the past and that of the present—a relic of the old court manners of which, from childhood up, one had heard so much—she formed a picture worthy of a Reynolds. She was dressed in a plain black dress, and her face was illumined by the silver white of her hair, "et la blancheur de son col."

"Ah!" she said, with evident emotion, "how often, my dear friend, has your grandfather greeted me at the house which, in the times of our misfortunes,

was the 'asile' of so many French refugees!—how kind he was to me!—how often I think of him, and of those who surrounded him! I am very old now, and you will hardly find this place agreeable to your tastes; but remain, I beg of you—it does me good to see the children of those I loved when I was a child."

I was quite touched with this mark of kindness, and I hardly knew what to answer when the old Countess led me to the dining-room, where no end of delicacies were laid out, and informed me that they generally lived very quietly and frugally in the country, but that, now I had come, she intended to make "noces et festins."

At that moment the dinner-bell rang, and I was glad of an opportunity to retire and seek strength and vigour in soap and water. Soap and water, indeed!—what a mistake!—water there was in small quantity—but soap?—not any. What was to be done? It was impossible to wash without soap—where could I get some? The butler started on an

expedition, which he knew would prove fruitless, and in my annoyance I was about to break out into invectives against French notions of cleanliness, when I heard a knock at the door.

"Who is it?"

"Stéphanie."

"Well done, old girl!" I whispered to myself. "What is it?" I said aloud.

"I've brought you some soap," and she laughed heartily as she said it.

"Hurrah!" was all I answered; and I heard her trotting away, laughing to her heart's content.

Our dinner consisted of five persons in all: the Countess, Stéphanie, myself, the chaplain, and a young ecclesiastical student, whose education was being carried on at the expense of Stéphanie, whose charities are boundless, and who, in the neighbourhood, is considered the benefactress and friend of all. I will not tempt the reader by a list of all the good things with which I was re-

galed; nor will I mention the various interesting subjects of conversation which were broached during dinner. This chapter is already too long; I leave it to the next to recount the practical results of the projects we planned for the following day.

Chapter III.

A FEATHER BED—JOSEPH—"IT WAS A SIGHT"—A WALK—A SAVAGE—L'ANGELUS—BREAKFAST—BEST SOUCHONG—CAUDEBEC—VILLE QUIER—A HORSE WITH A MONOMANIA—FONTENELLE.

CHAPTER III.

A FRENCH feather-bed !—the ideas till haunts me, like Marie's omelette, as one of the few things which are so essentially national, that neither love nor money can induce their importation into England. Oh ! the delightful repose which one enjoys in a French feather-bed, the comfort one experiences, the isolation in which one revels, as it were ; one feels as if one was smoothly carried on the crests of little playful waves, as one turns from right to left, and *vice versa.* Feelings of all kinds cross the mind—feelings of pleasure, of charity, of self-satisfaction. The consciousness of one's own comfort renders one incredulous to the hardships which others, less fortunate than oneself, may be enduring at the time. A total oblivion of the

past, a feeling of disregard for the future, and a perfect enjoyment of the past, mark the moment of waking in a French feather-bed, as one of the nearest possible approaches to complete (?) happiness. When I woke, the blinds were hermetically shut, and nothing but a kind of dim, hazy light, not sufficiently strong for daylight, filled the room. I felt that sleep had vanished; but the kind of cradle in which I was buried, propped on both sides by small monticules of feathers, made me endeavour to court again the departed god—but in vain. After two or three unfruitful attempts, I turned on my back, and for what reason I know not, began to ask myself whether my weight was equal to the body of feathers I had displaced, and whether the weight of a body in a feather-bed was in direct ratio with the weight of that body in water.

This reverie was disturbed by a knock at the door, and before I had time to say "entrez," in walked Joseph with a tray, conspicuous upon

which was a large-sized milk-jug, containing a whole pint of milk, a diminutive coffee-pot, about the eighth part of the milk-jug in size, a sugar-basin, and a small piece of dry bread. All this he laid upon a table by the side of my bed; and, without saying a word, proceeded to draw the blinds, when a flood of light came pouring into the room. After this operation, Joseph looked out of the window, then looked round towards me, and, with regular Caleb Balderston pride, remarked,

"Monsieur n'a, j'en suis sur, jamais rien vu de pareil."

I replied with a suppressed yawn, and an arm gradually extending towards him, that I should take an early opportunity of looking upon the fine view to which he called my notice.

"Ah! Monsieur n'a jamais goûté du café comme nous en avons ici."

To this I readily agreed, and, as Joseph had awakened my interest, I must introduce him to the

reader as the butler, "l'intendant," the factotum of Madame de C——'s household. Joseph was a tall, grey-haired man, with rather a handsome face, and certainly most polished manners. He had entered the Countess's family when quite a boy, and had inherited from the old servants, by whom he was trained, that admiration for the family he served which was so characteristic, and which was exclusive of all other families. No one was worthy to hold a candle before Madame de C——, and as for Mademoiselle, search the world through, and no one will ever be found to equal her! To those on whom his mistress frowned, the faithful servant frowned; to those on whom she smiled, he smiled.

Having noticed my reception, and heard my name often mentioned previously to my arrival, he had resolved to make my stay agreeable; and, being possessed, like all old servants, of a very loquacious temperament, I found it an easy matter to get him into conversation—indeed, it

was rather an arduous task after a time to make him desist.

"Il y a longtemps que monsieur a été en France?"

"It is my first visit to this beautiful part of France," I replied; "but I trust that, having once found my way, I shall be able to return often."

"Et monsieur vient d'Angleterre?"

"Yes."

Whereupon he began a long tirade about his visit to England when a boy—how he had been made to play at cricket, and had had his eye nearly knocked out—as could still plainly be seen —how the violent game of football always affected his digestion, and how French people are not made for violent exercise. Here I interrupted the worthy man by asking him when breakfast would be served; and on his replying at twelve, I suggested it might be time for me to get up, which caused him to take his departure.

As soon as he had left the room, I ran to the

window, and may I never forget the fairy-like view which greeted my eyes on that happy morning! Before me, and extending for many miles, were vast tracts of richly cultivated land, shadowed in the far distance by rising hills, which appeared to encircle a sea of vegetation.

At my feet was the terrace, from which the view extended down a verdant slope to the banks of the Seine, the winding course of which could be traced plainly on the right; and on a clear morning like that on which I first gazed on this splendid tableau, the distant spires of St. Ouen and of Rouen Cathedral could just be perceived. While the right bank, from which I was gazing, is at an average elevation of eighty feet above the river, the opposite bank is on a level with it; and when my eyes turned from the right to the left, there appeared one of those magical effects of perspective which no words can describe, and not the most artistic pencil could ever reproduce. The brilliant rays of a September sun were bidding

farewell to the morning dew, and their parting kisses appeared like tears of joy from the radiant eyes of friends who have not met for many a long year.

A more than ordinary brilliancy seemed to play upon the little pine wood; and through an "éclairci" which had been made, the eye rested on the glorious ruins of the Abbey of Jumièges, distant about three miles on the other bank.

How I regret my inadequacy to convey to the reader a faint idea of the splendour which encircled this view. It was at first like a mass of light seen through a telescope, and little by little each detail of the picture was detached, and became prominent. The crumbling towers, the ivy-covered walls, the Hall of Charles VII., which the beautiful Agnes Sorel had so often graced, glittered in the distance with a light more pure, more lovely than anything I had yet seen, or perhaps ever shall behold again.

On gazing on these noble remains, I could not

but recall to memory the graceful thought of Mrs. Norton—

> "Ruins! A charm is in the word:
> It makes us smile, it makes us sigh.
> 'Tis like the note of some spring bird,
> Recalling other springs gone by."

"Smile," indeed! I could not help smiling when I beheld, at last, what I had so long wished to behold, the spot which Agnes Sorel had so often graced; where William the Conqueror made Harold take an oath, which this proud Saxon was one day to break *patriæ causâ;* the spot where Edward the Confessor received that polished education which was one day to bear fruit, and induce him to begin that oldest and finest relic of our ecclesiastical architecture, Westminster Abbey.

A smile played on my countenance as I thought of the happy hours which must have been spent in that glorious abode; my face was illumined with the pleasure which filled my soul on gazing at this

matchless sight, and a thrill of delight ran through my whole frame, as I realized the magnificence of the panorama before me. But as soon as the first expression of gladness was over, a sigh forced its way into the air, a sigh which came from the very inmost recess of my heart. I had remembered that pleasure then, as now, is but transitory, and that it is but the forerunner of regret, and perhaps of pain. How hard, how difficult it is to catch a glimpse of happiness, to enjoy an hour of pleasure, that pleasure which nature alone can afford to its admirers, and which, in the relationship of life, can only be equalled by the disinterested friendship, that seldom can be met with, but does exist, as a proof of the kind of delights which man is destined to enjoy hereafter. And yet, when these are found, with what rapidity they vanish, they fly from us, as it were; and in proportion to the intensity of the rejoicing they have caused, do they leave a correspondent regret behind them.

Whilst gazing on this nature-beautified picture,

a cloud passed over the ruins, and the time-honoured walls, which a moment before had been so brilliantly lighted, were now enveloped, as it were, in a veil, and the shade which hung over them reminded one of the departed glories of the bygone traditions of this ancient monastery. Traditions! Ay, the word is pregnant with meaning, and on foreign soil can only be whispered. Tradition in France is fast becoming a mere by-word, and, if one might be allowed the expression, the standing tradition of a departed tradition, the "dream of a dream."

Residing, as I was, in the seat of one of the oldest legitimist families of France, how could I restrain my thoughts, and prevent their being carried off by a desire to contrast the chivalrous spirit of the past with the all-absorbing selfishness of the present day. France, the generous nation of Henri IV., had become the prey of a house whose motto must be war to traditions of all kinds; and the natural effects of a despotic rule were

now but too clearly visible in the anxious look and egotistical character of what was once the light-hearted and disinterested French nation.

As I reflected over this, the cloud passed, and the sun shone brilliantly again. I should never have tired looking at so fairy-like a sight, but Time, which is for ever reproaching us with our idléness, recalled me to the exercise of a duty incumbent on me that morning, namely, letter-writing.

If there is one thing on earth more odious than another it is to be obliged to write letters of business when the mind has been revelling in such delights as imagination frames around a picture which nature has allowed us to admire. The soul and the body become separated, as it were, the one still relishing the pleasures stored up, the other obeying mechanically the cruel calls made upon it.

By eleven, however, I had finished all I had to do, and my mind being now completely a stranger to all psychological influences, I noticed that the material part of my nature was getting rather loud in

its demands for food; and on entering the billiard-room for the purpose of exercising my skill at the cannon game until breakfast time, I encountered Stéphanie, who had just come down to look after me.

She greeted me with the statement that she had finished all her correspondence, had given all her household instructions, and was free to accompany me anywhere and everywhere for the remainder of the day.

I am shocked to own that the kindness of the remark was drowned by my desire to appease the calls of hunger, and I asked when breakfast would be ready.

"Ah, ah," laughed Stéphanie, "déjeûner dans une heure. Comment! vous avez faim quand tant de beautés naturelles vous entourent."

"Yes," I replied, "I must confess I am hungry, as my John Bull nature has not deserted me completely, and I always feel 'l'instinct du beau' stronger within me after meals than before."

"Have you seen the view from your room?" asked Stéphanie.

"I have, and I cannot tell you what delight I experienced at gazing on such a magical sight."

We then got into conversation on the various reflections with which the sight had inspired me, whilst our feet were carrying us mechanically in the direction which she chose to take, until we reached the place which Stéphanie had no doubt designedly led me to.

"This is the church which my mother has built," she said, "and I hope its architecture pleases you."

It was a pretty country church, beautifully clean, with a lofty spire, and standing itself very high, but as for architecture it was of that simple kind which calls forth neither observation nor remark. Not being particularly enthusiastic in my commendations of the church, my fair guide remarked:

"Puisque, je le vois, vous n'admirez pas l'église, venez au moins apprécier son pasteur."

So off we trotted to visit the chaplain, a tall and amiable countenanced man, with rather a *triste* look now and then, and great respect of manner. He was between forty and fifty years of age, and to his care Stéphanie had confided the education for the priesthood of a protegé of hers, Monsieur Paulin, a loutish hobbledyhoy kind of boy, whom I must introduce to the reader as the companion of my own and Stéphanie's subsequent rambles.

When we entered, his brother, a child of about six years of age, to whom, for the sake of a joke, I had been represented as a kind of savage, came to the door, and on being told by Stéphanie that I was the monster he had been led to expect, took to his heels, and rushed frantically through the house, screaming at the pitch of his juvenile voice that "Monsieur le Sauvage" had arrived, which antithesis caused a good deal of hilarity.

The Abbé conversed most sensibly on all kinds of subjects; but when he touched on English matters, I was surprised at his ignorance; indeed,

I may generally, though perhaps tritely, remark here that, notwithstanding the vicinity of the two countries, the proximity of our shores, and the constant intercourse between the two nations, the erroneous ideas—the, I may say, stupid notions which the generality of Frenchmen, even of the educated classes, have of England, is perfectly astonishing, and can only be traced to the erroneous impressions forced upon young French minds in their early education. On the whole, however, I was pleased to make the Abbé's acquaintance, and his extended information proved of great use to me subsequently.

We were still with him when the breakfast-bell rang at the hall, so we hurried off, and, as we left the Presbytery, the church bell announced that it was time to perform the devotions of "l'Angélus." Stéphanie knelt down on the grass, and perceiving two or three little girls coming back from school, singing merrily some hymn which, no doubt, they had learnt that morning, she beckoned to them to

come and kneel by her side, and recite the Ave Maria with her, which they immediately did. For example sake, I knelt down too, and, doomed, as I was, to experience every variety of pleasing feelings, I own that the unaffected manner in which this devotion was performed—the simple piety which was breathed with the words as they were uttered by my friend, filled me with delight. As I got up, I saw in the distance the peasants in the fields, both men and women, rising from their knees, after having recited the three usual "Hail Mary's!" L'Angélus takes place three times a day—at six in the morning, at twelve, and at six at night, and is very generally practised in France.

When we got to the dining-room, the old Countess, punctual to a minute—"l'exactitude est la politesse des rois,"—was sitting down to table, and Joseph was uncovering the dishes, by way of showing the fare on which we were to feast, previously to taking them off to the side table and then handing them round.

Madame de C—— gave me her hand—a mark of the highest esteem with the proud old ladies of the "ancien régime," which can only be acknowledged by kissing it respectfully; and with a smile on her face, in which it was evident that kindness of heart disputed with age the latter's authority to wrinkle so benign and so good a countenance, she asked me to sit on her right, observing that, though now she could not have a greater pleasure than to see me there, she could not help thinking with regret of the time—the good old time—"le bon vieux temps"—when the associate of her youth, my grandfather, had occupied a similar place.

"Mais pourquoi vous attrister?" she immediately added; "il faut pardonner aux vieilles femmes leur amour du passé. Le souvenir a été créé pour les récréer."

Meanwhile Stéphanie had taken her place at the other end of the table, and quite regardless of the ludicrous effect which, at her age, call-

ing her mother "maman," might produce on others, she continued the good habits of her girlhood; and on hearing her "mamma" recalling thoughts of a melancholy cast, she immediately turned the conversation, by giving her an account of our visit to the Curé.

Breakfast in France, as most of my readers are aware, means, literally speaking, dinner No. 1 —beginning with soup, and varying from dinner No. 2 in its termination only. Dinner No. 2 ends with "café noir" being brought round; and no one has even an opportunity at that time of calling for milk or cream, there being none, in the first place, and, in the second, no one being supposed to be so egregiously ignorant of the rules conducive to good digestion. But in dinner No. 1 tea and coffee are brought round, and the latter can be, indeed is, always taken with milk, and a piece of the traditional "brioche," which everybody can cook in France, but no one

can in England. "Café au lait" has always had great attraction for me; and at the end of a most sumptuous breakfast, I asked for some coffee, but both my hostess and her daughter silenced me at once.

"Not at all; you must have some tea. We have had some made expressly for you, because you are English, and we must insist on your not discontinuing your habits here."

I in vain remonstrated that I never took tea in England at luncheon-time. Joseph, joining issue with his mistress, suited the action to their words, and placed before me a large cup half-filled with milk. Why he gave me so much milk was a question I might as well have asked to the winds for the matter of an answer, for he was now busy in the process of making tea; and the process was so long, and required such painstaking, that a word from his lips at so exciting a moment might have spoiled the elixir which he was confident I was to enjoy; although, be it said, in parenthesis,

he did remark to me one morning in my room,

"Je préfererai mourir que d'avaler cette drogue."

This last sentiment, which never deterred him from administering the "drogue" to me, I fully entered into each day, as "my cup of bitterness" was put before me. The process consisted in placing a kind of little silver sieve over the cup, and from the hot-water jug—which, to render it justice, was elegant in form and graceful in appearance—five or six leaves of green tea tumbled out with the water into it; and, as the water filtered through the pores of this sieve, it carried with it a taste of the green leaves above mentioned, which taste was denominated the aromatic flavour of the best Souchong that could be procured at Rouen. I confess that it gave me a surfeit of tea for the remainder of my existence, and the very name of Souchong is enough to give me "des crispations de nerfs."

When breakfast was over, the old Countess took me to the terracé, from which the view I

had so much admired in the morning was to be seen; as grand, as majestic in its character, but not so poetical in appearance, nor so feeling in the hold which it laid on the mind's observation. There is no time like the morning for observing nature, and the peculiar charm which spreads itself then on all creation would indicate that nature is then offering itself in its purity, in its simplicity, to its Divine Maker, and making to Him the homage of its brightest gifts.

"Le jour annonce au jour sa gloire et sa puissance;
Tout l'univers est plein de sa magnificence."

The evening hue reflects regret, the midday sun bespeaks the present and its reality, the morning dew breathes hope, and hope is the anchor to which we all cling—the guide which leads us on. These and other thoughts I could not help indulging in, whilst the venerable Countess explained to me all the trouble she had taken to make her gardeners understand that the magnificent prospect which we beheld was worth to her old eyes double, ay,

three times the value of the timber they had been obliged to cut down to obtain it.

Our walk was interrupted by Stéphanie, who, the very essence of activity, came running up with Monsieur Paulin at her heels, and carrying my hat, exclaiming,

"Allons, venez vous? la voiture est à la porte."

I bade "au revoir" to the dear old Comtesse, and stepping into the apology for a Victoria, which was to convey us to all parts of the country, Stéphanie gave the directions, and we started for a place called Caudebec, passing through "la forêt de Brotonne," which joins the Landin, and where some capital shooting can be had, near the remains of the once beautiful Château de la Mailleraye, which belonged to la Marquise de Mortemart, and which some years back was entirely destroyed by "la Bande Noire," a party of Huns, who appear to have escaped the defeat of their race at Châlons, and to have survived in Normandy for the purpose of the sap and the mine.

On reaching the Seine, we put up our trap at an inn, "boat ahoyed" a ferry, which soon responded to our summons, and shortly landed in the midst of what is called "le pays de Caux" —the actual name of the little town where we got on shore being Caudebec, very picturesquely situated at the foot of a thickly wooded hill, and at the entrance to a beautiful valley.

This town, with a population of nearly 3,000 inhabitants, was formerly known as Chaldebec, and must originally have formed a kind of harbour and refuge for fishermen. That it was a fishing settlement cannot be doubted, and the proof exists in the town's armorial bearings, which are now three salmon on field azure, but which, up to 1826, were three smelts argent.

The church, built during the eighteenth century, is of the richest Gothic; the portico and the altar of the Blessed Virgin being most deserving of notice, in point of elegance and grace of both design and execution. The tower presents

a somewhat curious and uncommon aspect, being surrounded by three crowns, to represent the Papal tiara.

Caudebec is an historical town. Its resistance to the English army under Warwick, in the reign of Henry V., for the long space of six months, is sufficient to illustrate the bravery of its inhabitants, and the appointment of Talbot as governor of the conquered city, may be mentioned in proof of the gallantry of the defenders and the recognition of their bravery by the assailants. It became the scene of several battles at the time of the Ligue, and Henry IV., but after the sixteenth century Caudebec appears to have gradually settled down into the dull, quiet, and unimportant place which it now is.

Its manufactures of goat-skin gloves, and especially of hats, had a wide-spread reputation, but after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which compelled all the Protestant workmen to seek shelter elsewhere, Caudebec having been one of

their strongholds, these manufactures rapidly declined.

Whilst I was admiring the church, and Monsieur Paulin was gravely endeavouring to decipher some monkish rhymes, which he at last gave up as too heavy a tax even for his imagination, Stéphanie had gone to order a species of fly, and presently we heard the sounds of the "carrosse" at the door of the church.

Out jumped our guide, with her dress looped up, a necessity in the absence of any crinoline; her eyeglass fixed, as it were, permanently to her eye, and rushing into the church towards me, exclaimed, with much relish, that she had secured the only vehicle in the "Pays de Caux."

Followed by Monsieur Paulin, we got into the fly, and gave orders to be driven up the coast to the "Château de Ville-Quier," belonging to the family of that name, from which I was led to expect a view of more than ordinary interest. We had some difficulty in ascending the hill, and our

coachman insisted on Paulin and myself walking by the carriage during its perilous ascent. When we reached the top, the same flatness of country prevailed, and the same long Roman roads, studded, or rather framed with trees, greeted our eyes.

I sincerely hoped our fatigue would be rewarded by a view of the Château de Ville-Quier, which is considered, I believe, one of the model country-places in Normandy. The gates were shut, and we were at least half an hour before any one would answer. Meanwhile, we plainly saw the graceful forms of two white nymphs taking an airing, each hanging to the arm of a gentleman, whom Stéphanie pronounced at once to be the owner of the place.

Notwithstanding this recognition of a friend, she was informed that "le Baron de Ville-Quier était à Paris depuis plusieurs jours;" and that search where we would, we should not find him there.

To search was not, however, allowed us, and we were forced to drive off, greatly disgusted, as the reader may conceive.

Nothing daunted by this *contretemps*, we at once made up our minds to pay a hurried visit to the ruins of the Abbey of St. Wandrille, or, as it is better known, "l'Abbaye de Fontenelle," and thus more than make up for the disappointment which we had experienced.

Off we started on our journey homewards. On returning through Caudebec on our way to St. Wandrille, I was highly amused by a scene which took place between our coachman, his horse, and Mlle. Stéphanie. Our coachman was a kind of "bon paysan" with a cap and a smock-frock, who looked as dirty as any man could well look, but had a smiling countenance, and a most decided affection for the apology for a horse which he was driving. This horse, which more resembled Don Quixote's Rosinante than any living picture of that interesting quadruped I have ever seen, had,

for the space of twenty years, driven the same tumbling vehicle from Ville-Quier to S. Wandrille, and its partial driver had never allowed the hungry brute to pass the stables without giving it a handful of oats, and probably himself "un petit verre." Accordingly, as we passed the hotel, the coachman, without giving us previous notice, pulled up, and was going to descend from his box.

"What do you mean by this?" exclaimed my fair companion.

"I am going to get some oats for my horse," was the reply.

"He is full already," rejoined Paulin, who thought it necessary to back his patroness's words.

"Avancez!" I cried.

"Ah!" moaned the distressed coachman, "mon petit bidet est satisfait d'un grain, si monsieur et madame veulent bien le permettre, ce sera fait à la minute."

Meanwhile the hungry brute became impatient,

and Monsieur Jaques, seeing that we steadfastly kept to our determination to proceed on our journey, began to use the whip, an instrument which had not been called into requisition for at least twenty years, in order to prevent the animal from rushing frantically into the hotel.

"Allons, petit ami, vas tu avancer? Parbleu, petit ami, tu n'es pas gentil—mais sapristi vas-tu en finir? Sac . . . . qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, nom d'un?"

And so by degrees did our coachman work himself into a passion, but of no avail. The horse would not budge a step in advance. I threatened to take the reins myself—of no use; the proposition was looked upon in the light of an insult, and at once rejected.

"Nous prendrons une autre voiture."

"Mais," implored the driver, "accordez-lui un grain, mademoiselle."

"Non."

"S'il vous plaît, Monsieur."

"Decidedly not;" and at this juncture the beast got frantic, and, regardless of Monsieur Jaques, or any one else, deliberately turned round to walk into the hotel. At this Mademoiselle's fears got the better of her, and, in the height of her excitement, she cried out, "Allons, un grain pour la bête!"

The welcome words were whispered to the ears of the horse, who appeared to understand them, and became as steady as a lamb, ate literally not more than a handful of oats, and trotted off at full speed.

This adventure afforded us much amusement, though it must be allowed we were somewhat mortified to find that a horse's will was stronger than our own.

The road which leads to St. Wandrille is very pretty, and disposed as we were to enjoy everything we found the road even prettier and more agreeable than it really was. A few thatched cottages on the way, and small urchins playing at the entrance to these cottages, with an occasional young peasant girl appearing at the door, apparently to see that

the children were not run over, but in reality to look at the passing vehicle—all contributed to enliven our route.

We had to get down about a score of times, so as not to tire our quadruped, but finally reached the end of our journey, and stood before the once imposing "Abbaye de Fontenelle." This ancient abbey was founded by St. Wandrille, in 684, in the reign of Clovis, and is mentioned in some of the earliest Norman records. It derives its name from a small rivulet called Fontenelle, which has its source almost adjacent to the monastery; and it was not until the eleventh century that it took the name of its founder.

This ancient monument of religious faith appears to have been most unfortunate. It was burnt down a first time in 756, and a second time by the Normans in 862. It was burnt down again in 1250, and it was not until the middle of the fourteenth century that the church was rebuilt partially, for, though great pains were taken to make

it one of the finest monuments of ecclesiastical architecture in France, the abbey has ever remained unfinished. In 1631 the towers which rested on four columns of immense size, suddenly fell in, and in their fall caused the destruction of the entire nave and a great part of the choir.

These ruins adjoin a modern house of some size and appearance, and belong to the Duc de Stacpole, an Englishman by birth and family, but a foreigner by title. Would he be recognised and take precedence as a duke in England, is a question which is little to the purpose here; but that he must be honoured for rescuing from decay and oblivion the splendid ruins of which he is the happy possessor, is a fact which cannot for one moment be questioned.

When we rang at the hall, we were answered by a pretty little English maid, and to speak one's native tongue again was quite refreshing in these foreign regions. She showed us over the cloisters and refectory, which are still in very good preser-

vation, and testify to the care which their present owner has evinced in rescuing from total destruction and oblivion the magnificent remains of this once glorious abbey.

A few years back a blacksmith had established his forge and workshop in the very middle of the cloisters, and under the repeated knells of his hammer there is no saying whether any part of the ruins would have been left for the admiring gaze of the tourist, had not the Duc de Stacpole most creditably come forward in the name of art and saved the place from destruction.

It being rather late, we effected a hurried departure homewards; and the evening was spent in talking over the pleasant and various incidents which had characterised the day.

Chapter IV.

DREAMS—A BEDROOM—SLAVERY—OLD AND NEW FRANCE —A FAIR—AN ALLOCUTION—TURQUETIN—AN EGG DINNER.

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CHAPTER IV.

HOW delightful, after a day's wandering in search of the beauties of nature, to find them again in one's dreams, and then to experience almost the same delight, without any of the fatigue, which the efforts in search of them had caused when awake.

Dreams are the result of the play between imagination and memory—the football, as it were, which the one throws to the other, and which, according to the success of either, presents us with the image of some familiar person or object, or with the creations of our own fancy. Thus it was that, after a fatiguing but all-interesting day, I retired to dreams, which, owing to the power of my memory over my imagination, caused me to travel

again through the preceding day's delightful wanderings; and much put out was I when Joseph's voice woke me from my reveries.

"Pas de courses aujourd'hui, monsieur, à moins que monsieur ne veuille prendre un bain de pluie," was the facetious prefacing remark of the old butler.

"I am sorry to hear it," I said. "What can we do?—is there no chance of the weather clearing up?"

"Not the slightest," he remarked; "and, what's more, it is a great pity, for the 'foire' takes place to-day at Bourg-Achard, and the poor people won't have their accustomed fun."

"What kind of 'foire' is this you are speaking of?" I said; "is it an annual festivity, or a biennial one, or both?—and what are the principal attractions of this 'foire'?"

Joseph, who chuckled inwardly at the prospect of a good long gossip, began his explanations about the delights, amusements, jovialities, mirth, and

fun which reigned at these country-village gatherings, and laid a particular stress on the great "Turquetin," the man of men, the "dexterous of all dexterous"; the "Docteur par excellence, un arracheur de dents superfin"—a species of demi-god, whose arrival was the signal for the restoration of health generally, and teeth in particular. Some peasants actually suffer toothache a whole year, rather than go to a neighbouring town and have the obnoxious stump drawn out by another than Turquetin.

Interested by the account, and incited by recollections of Dulcamara in "l'Elisir d'Amore," that graceful production of Donizetti's musical genius, I made up my mind that, rain or no rain, I should wind my way to Bourg-Achard, and see this king of dentists; but first resolved to consult my guide and friend Stéphanie. I accordingly walked to the bottom of the passage in which my room was situated, and knocked at Stéphanie's door, in the hope that she would come out and

settle with me what was to be done. To my great surprise, she replied to my knock, and "Ê tes-vous là, Mlle. Stéphanie ?" by a—

"Yes, yes, come in !"

"Come in !" I thought to myself; "surely she takes me for some one of the household !" So I reiterated my demand to trouble her for a few moments only.

"Mais entrez donc," she said. "Why remain there at the door when there's a room to walk into ? We receive in our bedrooms in France—you who have lived so much amongst us, surely ought to know this."

I begged she would excuse my hesitation, but I thought she might be busy, and so on—thinking all the while of the face which at home our English spinsters would make, were it ever insanely proposed that their bedrooms should be turned into boudoirs during the day-time. I walked in, notwithstanding these reflections, and found Stéphanie at a little deal table, upon which were a

dozen prayer-books, as many letters, a rosary, a few silver medals, and some scanty writing-materials. Seated on a little cane-bottomed chair, with a white pocket-handkerchief round her head by way of "coiffure," with the rosiest cheeks I have ever seen in any Frenchwoman, Stéphanie looked as if she was sitting for some picture. Before her was a bed, only remarkable for the snowy whiteness of its curtains; and near her stood a little girl with uncommonly short petticoats, and stockings half buried in her shoes, to whom she was teaching the Catechism. As I entered, she dismissed the child.

"Que me voulez-vous?"

"I hear, mademoiselle, that Turquetin is to be at Bourg-Achard to-day. Can't we go and see him?"

"Certainly; why not? Let me see how the weather looks, and how the time goes. Rain, rain, more rain! I am afraid, Monsieur H——, there is but a poor chance of gratifying your wishes to-

day; and then it's close upon twelve, and I have not ordered the carriage."

"Never mind about the carriage," I said; "I'll walk there."

"Ah! ça non; you are staying with us, and as my mother has devolved you to my care, you'll do as I please."

This last sentence was wholly characteristic of the life one is condemned to lead in French country-houses. "Accablés de politesse, assommé de civilités," render perfectly one's feelings, where liberty of action is entirely taken away from one. Of amusement there is no lack, but that amusement only which your host selects for you, hence to Englishmen a most uncomfortable time, when every effort is made to prevent their thinking it so.

"Comme vous voudrez, Mademoiselle," I politely answered. "Je suis tout entier à vos ordres."

"Well done!" said Stéphanie; "you are becom-

ing quite a Frenchman," evidently in her mind the cream of compliments, the acme of flattering sayings, the stroke by which my heart must be conquered. "My orders are," she pursued, "that you forthwith go down to the billiard-room and await my arrival. I intend to beat you 'au carambolage,' (cannon game). You think that we women are puny wretches, who can only stitch and sew, and are shut out by want of skill, cleverness, and strength from all you men's pleasures. You are greatly mistaken. I sometimes shoot," and she showed me a small pistol that might carry a hundred yards, and probably cause an acorn to tremble if touched in the core by the missile. "I fish, and I skate."

It was my turn to say "bravo!" a bravo proceeding more from astonishment than admiration. As for billiards, I can even now say that a more expert hand at cannons I seldom met. Our game was interrupted by the breakfast-bell; and in the dining-room I found as usual the dear old

Countess waiting our arrival, and looking more aristocratic than any woman I had ever yet seen.

There is a peculiar placidity of countenance, a cast of melancholy and thorough amiability combined, in the few ladies of the old *régime* one here and there still meets in Imperial France, which at once command respect, love, and admiration. Contrasts are always, like comparisons, odious; but so are our great ladies to those of "la jeune France" —that is, "la France de l'Empire;" so are the old Bourbonists to them. It is not in the *salons* of Imperial followers, that great manners, dignity of deportment, gracious amiability of demeanour, are to be found, but in those of the much abused "Faubourg St. Germain." There can be traced remnants of olden France, relics of past grandeurs, as well as, some may say, narrow and inherited views; but the aristocratic spirit of the Bourbon Race still lives there, untouched and unsullied by innovations of an age they fain would ignore.

It was my lot one year to find the houses of the

"Faubourg St. Germain" suddenly shut to all amusement in the midst of a season which had promised to be very brilliant. This sudden stoppage of gaieties was caused by the death of a royal Duchess boasting the blue blood of Bourbon.

Having some time to spare in Paris, I therefore resolved to consecrate it to a study of Napoleonian society. I shall never forget how struck I was by the contrast. Two people—two nations could not have been more different. A love of pleasure, nearly delirious, reigned supreme, at the cost of all I had so much admired in the little world on the other side of the Pont Louis Quinze, and in many instances at the cost even of decency. Without doubt, these *fêtes* were extremely brilliant; but, for some reason or another, one regretted the comparatively dull parties of the "Legitimists."

It would not be fair, however, to characterise one set as perfect, and the other imperfect; I be-

lieve that, with the older members of the circle, are fast disappearing the traditional dignity of the reunions, and great no doubt must be the disappointment which awaits a return to Paris after two years' absence from a season there.

These thoughts, which the old Countess's presence was sure to bring to my mind, formed, I believe, the grounds of a conversation, with the details of which I need not tire the reader's patience.

Luncheon—as we would call it, breakfast as they did—over, and the sun having shown a symptom of wishing to issue from the *douche* bath it had received the whole morning, Stéphanie and I, well provided with furs, and mackintoshes, and umbrellas, we started for Bourg-Achard; and well we did so, for it turned out a lovely afternoon, and our boots alone on our return gave proof of the morning's rain.

A long row of wooden huts, every board of which was numbered, so that they could easily be

pulled down and rebuilt in the space of a couple of hours, served the purpose of temporary shops, and were profusely stocked with every kind of "bric à brac" imaginable, to suit the tastes of old and young, healthy and infirm. The only street of Bourg-Achard was crowded with buyers; and, what with the sounds of penny whistles from the mouths of scores of delighted urchins, the beating of drums by a dozen tattooed jackanapes inviting the crowd to see some fellow-creatures stand one upon the other's shoulders, and the shouts of laughter from the women, it was a deafening affair, if not a brilliant one. Here, prudent matrons were furnishing their household out of the savings of the year; there, gay young women were winking, half to a brooch, a ring, or some such article of vanity, and half to the gay Jeannetons by their sides—winks that had their meanings, which were edged both ways, and both ways, therefore, dangerous.

On the right some fat farmers were gathered

round, and bidding for a dozen four-legged animals, each more like Rosinante than the numerous pictures taken of that celebrated steed—each shouting at the other, and calling his next neighbour indiscriminately a thief, a rogue, and a liar! On the left, a party of swells, sons of the richer farmers in the neighbourhood, were rollicking together in the free indulgence of bad cigars, worse gloria (coffee and brandy) and broad jokes. Straight before us a circle was formed round a "paillasse," a clown, or whatever such men are called, who made the company understand how difficult a thing it was for a child to stand erect on the inverted feet of his father.

"Ça, messieurs," said this man, "ça fut l'objet de mon ambition; oui, mesdames, mon petit garçon et moi, nous fûmes contents, quand, comme dit le marmot, nous fussions vainqueurs de nos difficultés."

Why the man insisted on using this tense of the auxiliary verb was a wonder to me, I fain

would have required him to explain, but I listened on.

"Voyez ça, mesdames, comme c'est agile, c'est comme de la cire à cacheter qu'on retourne dans ses doigts."

This was the remark which accompanied a peculiar twist of the father's hand, which produced a kind of mill or rotary movement in the child's body.

"Ce petit tourne, mesdames, comme un poulet à la broche, mais comme le cuisinier qui tourne le poulet se fait payer pour son travail, je suis sûr, messieurs et mesdames, que vos cœurs charitables" —and here followed a long digression on the wonderful tenderness of the hearts of his audience, known, they were assured, not only in Normandy, but in all the world, and *even* in England— "Encourageront un père qui dévoue son fils à la grande cause qui occupe aujourd'hui les savants de l'univers, la cause de l'élasticité pratique du corps humain."

So able a speech could not be answered but by a shower of sous, and two small white pieces from Stéphanie and myself. These the Harlequin took up quickly, and casting a sly glance at me, and then at the crowd, proceeded as follows:—

"Gentlemen and ladies, I knew not that I was even so considered as I am. I perceive among my audience a descendant of the men whom the Normans conquered when they invaded England. He's come to see the conquerors of his fathers and the marvels of my art. I thank him in the name of my compatriots, and I shall, after this performance of an imperative duty . . . proceed a little further up."

The impudence of the scoundrel was such, that my first impulse was to knock him down, my next to give him in charge; but the roars of the bystanders, as they saw my discomfiture, and particularly the literal screams of laughter of Stéphanie, caused me to view the matter more philosophically, and take it good-humouredly. Well, I

did so, for I was soon after the object of marked attention on all sides, which I perceived was mostly caused by the popularity of my guide.

As we were proceeding towards the "play-houses," a "cornet-à-piston" was heard, and a peculiar carriage, drawn, however, by two capital horses, came down at a rattling pace, and stopped at about a yard from where we were standing. The carriage was of a flaming red colour, very much like that of Her Majesty's mail-carts in London—the forepart being built phaeton fashion, the aft, to all appearance, like a funeral car. A cry of satisfaction issued from every throat, and the pleasure was at its height when the wide-famed Turquetin made his appearance, and pronounced his opening speech, something to this effect, if I remember right.

"Content de vous revoir, très chers amis; je me demande si vous souffrez?—Si les dents vont bien, je m'en vais, mais comme je vous aime, j'espère que vous souffrez, car je désire rester.

I've travelled a hundred leagues to be here to-day to save you from pain. Round me you all that have teeth—I mean decayed ones. Here, John, hold this powder! That's right, my friend, be firm—very well. John, sound the trumpet. Look here, gentlemen—the largest tooth I have drawn these last ten years—only one franc, my friend, and ten centimes for the powder, it will clean your knives and spoons and forks wonderfully well; it's John's profit—one franc, ten centimes—thank you! Now, madame, don't be nervous—off with that handkerchief—bad thing, heat. Now for it—out with the brute! Ah! mon Dieu! c'est le Diable, qu'avez vous fait, quel gros péché!—but, never mind, it's all square! Will you like to keep the monster?—here he is in paper. Ah! ma mie, tu es très gentille;" and so he went on, without stopping for a second—encouraging, working, receiving his money, and then off to some other place. They say cross-sweeping in England is the most lucrative business open to young men to

come; tooth-drawing must, I should say, be the same in France.

Turquetin himself is a curiosity. His knowledge of the weakness of these good country people, his skill too, independently of his quack, earn for him a just reputation, and, as Stéphanie observed, "Une foire sans lui est une foire manquée."

We then ate gingerbread, won at a grotesque kind of roulette-table, and determined on seeing one of the numerous spectacles which were given. At the place we went to, a party of Englishmen were being most fearfully licked by two dark mustachioed Frenchmen, who kissed each other after the fight, and talked a great deal about "l'honneur du nom Français, la gloire," and "la France," and finally brought down the house with a thunder of applause. We also visited a spurious Tussaud gallery, where we were shown Her Gracious Majesty attired in a tricolour gown, and a ruffle à la Elizabeth, shaking hands with the Empress, dressed in a new-fashioned Highland costume, in

return for the dressy compliment of the English sovereign. Add to these dresses the peculiar countenances which both the crowned heads wore on that occasion, and it will not be surprising if both Stéphanie's loyalty and mine to the reigning race in each country became at fault, and afforded us food for wild merriment.

"Ce n'est pas tout," said my guide, when we left this "gallery of art," as it was denominated, "il faut que nous montions à cheval;" so forthwith we made for a tent near by, under which wooden horses were moved, world-fashion, round an axis or pole in the middle of the tent. Upon one of these I was instructed to mount, while Stéphanie got upon another; and a barrel organ, which would have won the heart of some mathematical friends at home, struck up the "Deh Conte" at a double quick time, and being each supplied with an iron ring-sticker (so I denominated the instrument given to me), the horses began to move. When we had reached a certain degree of swift-

ness, some rings were placed within our reach, and through these we were to pass our iron stick. I happened to carry off the winning ring, and the speed from that moment slackened, until we came to a halt. Then I was informed that I might have a second turn "pour rien," because I had won. This great favour I declined, and so off we both trotted in search of fresh amusements. The cries of "Un sou, mesdames, entrez, un sou, pour voir la merveille du siècle, un sou, oui, mesdames, la chèvre à double pieds, un sou." This we could not resist, so in we went to see a goat with eight instead of four feet.

What the poor animal must have suffered to become a world's wonder is more than I dare think upon, and glad was I, for the exhibitor's sake, who thought it a means of catching an honest (?) penny, that no member of the British Society for the Protection of Animals was present, or it might have fared ill with the man.

While on the subject of animals, I may gener-

ally remark, that in France there is a wanton cruelty which is quite revolting. The finest horse is no more protected from ill-treatment by his groom, if a Frenchman, than a cart-horse from the kicks of his merciless driver; and the brutalities to which other animals less useful are exposed defy description, or rather proscribe it.

Sickened by the sight, we left in a hurry; and, after buying some toys and other knick-knacks for Stéphanie's school-children, we wound our way to our carriage, and made for Routot, a village about a mile off, where there is a fine old Norman church, and a model school, as those which have won Government prizes are called. Both these places I visited with much interest. The cleanliness of the school-room, the interest taken in it by the master, his drawings, which ornamented the walls, varied here and there by charts of his own design, and appropriate devices, made me envy for our country schools in England such able services as this man could bestow.

The War Department at home sends every year some officers to foreign countries, for the purpose of studying the efficiency and organization of foreign armies. Why don't the Privy Council send out competent men each year to some country, to report on the manner in which the educational department of that country is conducted? In the same way that the War Department derives much useful information from the visits it prescribes, would the Council of Education benefit by such missions, and give to scholastic institutions under its supervision a fresh and beneficial impulse.

While thinking over this matter, and conversing with Stéphanie on the subject, we passed through some beautiful country back to the Landin, which we reached in time for a "diner maigre," it being Ember Week—which means that, besides Fridays, Wednesdays and Saturdays are likewise proscribed days as regards the use of meat.

But in France "qu'importe?" The fast days

have to me always proved feast days, and one of the peculiarities of the dinner which awaited our arrival was that, there being no fish (the Seine flowed at the foot of the Castle)! we were confined to eggs. Twelve dishes at least were brought round, composed of eggs done in every possible fashion; omelettes, "au naturel, en chemise, en salade, en haché, aux pommes de terre, au pain," each dish accompanied by appropriate sauces, the like of which I have never tasted in London, except, perhaps, at the Spanish Embassy in the time of the Marquis de M——, whose taste for good dinners was only equal to his love of poetry—and is there not a very close affinity between the two tastes? They are both good, and start from the same principle, with this difference—that the one helps the other by keeping the mind clear of all miasms which issue from coarsely cooked aliments.

A rubber of whist, that delightful ending to a pleasant day, brought this one to a close.

Chapter V.

VANITY—LANDIN SCHOOL—SISTERS OF CHARITY—APATHY—LONDON SEASON—DUCLAIR—AN HISTORICAL RECOLLECTION—ST. GEORGE DE BOSCHERVILLE—ATHEISM *v.* BELIEF.

CHAPTER V.

AS in England, French ladies have a curious predilection for superintending their village school, and are never so happy as when they can take any stranger to admire the neatness of the establishment, the proficiency of the pupils, and the excellent management of the masters—all which three qualities naturally reflect on the admirable superintendence of the young or old lady to whose care the efficient maintenance of the school has been entrusted. There is vanity at the bottom of all this, as in everything else, but vanity of the right sort.

While on the subject of vanity, it might not be unadvisable to inquire a little into it. It is so prevalent a fault, that a wholesale condemnation of it

is as unjust as would be too much leniency towards it. Vanity—and in the word I comprise all esteem, both physical and moral, of oneself—is quite as often a stimulus to do well as it is a means of doing wrong. How many young men have been accused of vanity where there was only a strong desire to fight successfully the battle of life, backed by the knowledge that they had no one but themselves to befriend them.

How often have narrow-minded people endeavoured to check in youth that "feu sacré" which incites them to rise above mediocrity, on the plea that "conceit must be put down." And in England is it not an ordinary phrase, "That young man is too bumptious; he'll never lose anything by asking; he's too pushing; his vanity is too great for his body; we'll soon put that down." And curiously enough it is always with young men that such language is used. What is the result? That England teems with mediocrity. There must necessarily be a time in a young man's life when, do

what one will, he'll think himself a paragon of perfection, and that time is at the age when he passes from boyhood into manhood. He thinks it right then to ape his elders, to adopt a particular manner of walking, speaking, or dressing; but, deny it who can, does not such puppyism disappear soon with the contact with men of his own age? It is but too true that we must all learn experience, and this rubbing out, as it were, of an assumed nature, forms part of that experience. How often has not one heard young men brought up in foreign lands accused at home of "showing off" and "affectation," because forsooth they wished to express themselves clearly, and did so in the language they knew best, imagining, perhaps erroneously, that that language might be understood as well as their native tongue. Nay, more, whenever a young man in England attempts some serious conversation, he is called clever, a term so generally used that one begins to doubt its real meaning. It is part of our nature to wish to be praised, because praise is en-

couraging, and at no time of life is encouragement so necessary as in that of youth, when a turn can be given to the impulse of nature which may bring great fruits. The system of envious papas and jealous mammas uniting in depreciating the son of their neighbour on the score of his vanity, because their own progeny is so completely a compound of their nullity, that they cannot possibly avoid seeing what stares at them so palpably, is one which has effected a most deplorable result in this country. Is there in the world anything more noble, more generous, more true, more Spartan-like, than an English boy? One may truly answer with the poet, were the question put, England "would rise and thunder 'Nay!'" But does that spirit remain after the boy has once been exposed to the yellow eye of envy of those older friends, eager to dispel early illusions, sometimes the only pleasures a man is destined to know in this life? To this, perhaps in a chorus of groans,

the young men of England would answer "No!" Vanity, after all, is but a species of hope, but, like all defects, if pushed to the extreme, it is highly offensive, and far be it from me to advocate it; but when the means employed to repress it are so despicable, a sense of common justice prescribes a word in condemnation.

At the threshold of the school belonging to the Landin to which Stéphanie took me by appointment before breakfast, we were received by two sisters of charity, who have care of the school—two rosy-cheeked, middle-sized women, with caps as white as needs must be their spotless souls.

Wherever the blessed influence of the "Sœurs de Charité" is felt, they must be hailed as the tutelary divinities of the place, diffusing around them health, and happiness, and peace. The objections raised, sometimes with an appearance of plausibility, against certain monastic institutions, can never, by any stretch of ingenuity, be

made applicable to these truly charitable sisters. They have not sought, in the privacy and oblivion of conventual life, any exemption from the performance of great and active duties. The sentiments and virtues which dignify and actuate their lives are of a far more exalted character. Shunning alike the austerities of an overdrawn zeal, and the comparative laxity of milder monachism, the "Sœurs de Charité" are really what their name indicates them to be, ministers of joy and consolation to their fellow-creatures. For the sake of doing good they deem no sacrifice too painful. Fearless of danger, and nobly regardless of self, they brave alike the horrors of a gaol and the infection of a pest-house, to reclaim the inmates of the one, and heal those of the other. Ready alike to nurse the wounded in battle, and console those whom death has suddenly plunged into despair, they find their recreation in teaching the young to lisp the name of God from their earliest age.

Having been introduced to Sœurs Marie and

Antoinette, I was conducted by them along the kitchen, pantry, and offices, which they had particularly at heart that I should see—for what reason I know not, unless to show me how clean they could keep every part of the house—to the school-room, where, as soon as I entered, a score or two of children, between five and twelve years of age, began a chorus, in which the variations of time and tune appeared to me to correspond to the number of voices that took part in singing it.

I confess that I then well understood the humour Dr. Johnson must have been in when he hoped devoutly that the two little boys who had learned some lines for him would recite them at the same time, by which means more noise would be made, and it would be sooner over.

The chorus I was bound to admire was one of those felicitous musical productions which know no end; and I am fast inclining to the belief that, had I not stood up to harangue the school, I

should even now have been listening to the catching ditty—for, by a kind of magnetic influence, I found both the good sisters, and even Stéphanie, joining in the chorus.

"Très bien, mes enfants, à merveille, vous êtes tous de petits rossignols, je le vois." Such were the prefacing remarks to a speech I had been told to make, and which, by putting a sudden stop to the display of their phonetic propensities, allowed me to obtain for them the expected day's holiday. Wishing, however, to notice how far these children of the poor evinced intelligence, and compare their intellectual standard with that of children of the same age and position in England, I put a few questions, which generally were correctly answered, but to some of which I got regular Irish responses. Thus, when I asked a little boy, whose fat face denounced an evident liking for food of all kinds, to say grace, he smiled, and remained silent.

"Now, my little man, don't be shy. What do you say before your dinner?"

Another smile, and continued silence.

"Well, what does your father say before he sits down to eat?"

"Ah! mon père! Oh! il dit, 'Attaque, attaquons,' et il se met à manger!"

Of the truth of the answer I fear there was but little doubt; but I have always remembered it as one of the quaintest answers of the kind I have ever received.

The system of saying the prayers, beginning by the first on the bench, and ending by the last, while each boy or girl between these says one phrase, was carried on here as in some schools in England; but happily there were no absentees, and, therefore, "the boy who believes in the Holy Ghost" responded to his call when his turn came.

After conversing a little with the two "sœurs," Stéphanie and I returned to the Landin for breakfast, I much pleased with what I had seen; she charmed with "le petit original," as she called the

boy who had answered my question about the grace so readily. Breakfast was hardly over, when Stéphanie called out to me,

"Allons, Monsieur, allons, voyons, ne soyez pas lent comme vos compatriotes, mais leste comme les miens."

If she had known that my want of energy proceeded from the disgust I had for the cup of tea which was daily apportioned to me, I daresay my fellow-countrymen would have been more mercifully treated than they were by this last speech of hers.

Among the numerous anomalies existing in France, this last sentence pointed to one of the most striking—the apathy of the English. One might well ask what is meant by the word. If every person is apathetic who does not mind travelling five hundred miles in a straight line to earn the honour of being eligible for the Travellers' Club, or of putting up with the discomfort of railways, steamers, coaches, porters,

customs, foreign knavery, and pilfering, for the sake of ascertaining the merits of a disputed scientific question, or in search of pleasure, the English certainly deserve the appellation. If lolling about for ever, smoking without interruption, singing and whistling all day long, are signs of great energy, then, indeed, France has the advantage. But to talk of the apathy of the English is sheer nonsense. The commercial prosperity of the country supposes a working energy of the highest order. The athletic superiority we claim over all nations is due to constant exercise of our physical qualities; and anyone who has gone through a London season must admit that to dance every night in a space not four feet in circumference, and exposed to the blows and kicks of frantic Terpsichoreans, is sufficient proof of the energy we expend in pursuit of amusement.

On these grounds I resented Stéphanie's taunt, and told her as much when, comfortably packed up in our little carriage, we set off on our way to

Duclair. Having started rather an interesting subject of conversation, we paid little or no attention to the country around, which, monotonous while we kept on the left bank of the Seine, became very interesting as we descended the bank, and passed near one or two prettily situated country houses.

"What do you call a London season?" said my fair companion, after I had referred to the almost insulting words in which she had spoken of "la jeune Angleterre."

This question, I confess, took me rather aback; and I believe sincerely that, had the question been put to Dr. Johnson himself, that great master of our language would fairly have been puzzled. A moment's consideration might probably have brought him to the conclusion that it is a time of the year when English pleasure-seekers are beside themselves—a fixed period for indulging whims, living on one's friends and abusing them; or, again, a limited time to see one's name in print.

But, in point of fact, the term is too comprehensive to admit of a concise explanation. It means so much, and yet so little, it reveals such truths, destroys so many illusions, exposes such defects, creates such various feelings, it refers to so many, and yet to so few, that a short and clear definition of its meaning is next to impossible.

"Were I a philosopher, mademoiselle, I would say that a London season is the race of pleasure after time. Were I a moralist, I would style it a period marked out for the expansion of amiable (?) feelings; but being neither, I call it a time of the year consecrated by us to amusement, and one the return of which I always hail with pleasure."

Duclair, which we reached on crossing the Seine at Bardouville, is an uninteresting little place, famed only for the excellent *fish* caught there.

Like all old Norman towns, it possesses a pretty church, with fine stained glass windows;

but ten minutes constitute to the utmost the time one may devote to admiring the place.

Having left our vehicle at Bardouville, we had to secure a trap of some sort to take us to Boscherville, where there is an abbey, to see which we had undertaken our long journey. After some difficulty, we finally lighted upon a highly-perched phaeton, which we hired; and, having got into the conveyance by means of a small ladder, we started on our expedition.

Before leaving this place, however, it may not be uninteresting to the reader to know that the market, which takes place there every Tuesday, is an institution of Richard the Lion Heart, who, after beating Philip Augustus of France, in 1198, at the battle of Vernon, came to the Abbey of Jumièges to spend Whitsuntide. So pleased was he with the reception that was given to him, that he granted to the monks of Jumièges "the right of market at Duclair on every Tuesday during the year, together with the privileges

attached to other markets." What those other privileges were I know not, and confidently hope no one will ask, but that they must have been considerable may safely be assumed.

After twice escaping being upset, we reached St. Martin, or, as it is more commonly called, St. Georges-de-Boscherville, a village which, in the tenth century, was called Bauderi-Villa, but is better known in history as the village of Hermentrude, where William the Conqueror caused himself to be removed, when, having settled his temporal affairs at Rouen, he felt his end at hand. Here dwelt Herlewin, the poor country knight, who, as Agnes Strickland informs us, "undertook to convey the royal corpse to Caen at his own cost, for interment in the Abbey of St. Stephen."

The Abbey of Boscherville formerly belonged to the monks of the Benedictine order, and was founded about 1060 by Raoul de Tancarville, a chamberlain of the Conqueror's. Part of the buildings which constituted the monastery has

been pulled down, but the church and chapter house are still extant. The church is 206 feet in length in the interior, 60 feet wide and 50 high. It is a fine specimen of the crossed shape Norman church architecture, with pilasters, and an east apse 96 feet long and 26 wide. The spire is 180 feet high, and is surrounded by two obelisk-form towers on the right and left of the great porch. Its principal architectural features consist in the remarkable harmony which exists in all its parts. It appears to be a massive whole, which, unlike most churches, has escaped the additions of ages subsequent to its foundatiou. One window "en ogive" perhaps, and the two little campanillas of the portico, alone appear to be after-thoughts.

We spent a long time in admiring the fine proportions of this church, in looking over which we were amply repaid for the trouble we had taken in reaching it; and I was very sorry when time, that

"Vessel under sail;"

that

"Eagle in its way
Darting down upon its prey;"

that

"Arrow in its flight,
Mocking the pursuing sight,"

as old Francis Quarles has it, caused us to wind our way back to Duclair, and thence across the river to the Landin.

At dinner our party was increased by the presence of one or two abbés of the neighbourhood, and the conversation naturally assumed a religious turn, which I must briefly recall, as an opinion was expressed which struck me as most forcibly true.

There exists at present in Europe a silent but desperate struggle between religion and irreligion—that is, between Catholicism and Atheism; and the attacks to which of late years the Pope has been exposed are but a phase of that struggle, and a means by which "l'incredulité" hopes to arrive at its end. Barring Russia, where there exists a re-

ligious feeling, which, from its prevalence, may be considered as characteristic of the nation, and England, the only country where Protestantism can be said to be genuine—that is, conscientiously believed and practised—there really exists no religion in Europe except that which acknowledges the Pope for its head. And this admits of very little explanation to make its meaning at once perfectly clear. Men hate trouble and change; they are therefore attached, to a certain degree, to the opinions and creed they have been taught in their childhood. As they grow up, however, the duties, which such belief and opinions make it incumbent upon them to peform, become onerous, troublesome, and they are anxious for a pretext to dispense with them. Such a pretext is easily found, but so true is it that

"Words without thought never to heaven go."

In like manner faith without works cannot possibly exist. Belief implies religion; religion practice of certain rules, the observance of certain forms of

worship, and the "abnegatio sui." Thus it follows naturally that if a man gives up the forms of worship to which he has been used, the obligatory practice of those moral rules which he has been taught, and his willingness to sacrifice his own views in matters of religious belief to those of higher and abler authorities, that man forfeits his Creed for so long a time as he remains thus disposed. If this be true with every religion, it must needs be more so still with the Catholic religion, which forbids expressly that which the world looks upon as the greatest pleasures, which prescribes a perpetual fight against the carnal instincts of our nature, and places its followers in the constant dilemma of either pleasing God by obeying His commandments and those of His Church, or offending Him mortally, that is, by mortal sin. In no other religion is it so difficult, in fact, impossible, to reconcile duty with obedience to self-inclinations; and no wonder, then, that men, anxious to live at ease, and without restraint, give up such practices as hinder them

from doing what they please. This does not mean that they give up altogether their belief; for a time they maintain it on account of the same all-absorbing love of ease which impelled them at first to forego what they considered so onerous, but only for a time—man's nature is essentially proud, and sooner or later he always endeavours to prove to the world at large that he, and only he, is right. To do this he must silence that voice within him which ever and anon tells him of his error; and as, by a law of imperative human necessity, man must worship something, be that something ideal, self, or created, he must, in proclaiming himself right, deny the institutions of an all-potent Creator. This constitutes Atheism proper; for Atheism, in the sense that man denies *in toto* the existence of a Creator, is a term so absurd, or rather so unintelligibly sublime, as to permit of its being immediately negatived or erased. Such is the case with part of the Catholic Continent allied with that part which does not profess Catholicism,

against the other part which does. Protestantism abroad—what is it? A mere form, a mere myth, as different from the English Church as character can make the people who profess these religions.

I retired to my room thinking over this conversation.

Chapter VI.

A "POULET"—AMIABILITY—"MONSIEUR"—COMPLIMENTS—A BROUGHAM IN TOWN IS NOT A BROUGHAM IN THE COUNTRY—SHAKING HANDS—A WALPOLIAN GREETING—OLD AND NEW ENGLAND—CONVERSATION "SUR LA POINTE D'UNE AIGUILLE"—SENSATIONAL SCENE—FRENCH OBJECTIONS TO TRUTH—A DINNER PARTY.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH my coffee, Joseph brought me a note, which I at once recognised to be in Stéphanie's hand. It ran thus :—

"Monsieur,

"Endimancher-vous, nous allons voir nos voisins, et Maman nous accompagne. Elle veut elle-même vous présenter au voisinage—à midi donc, et en-soleil-lez-vous si c'est possible, car je veux que votre réception soit dû à vos propres merites, et non à ceux de vos amis.

"STÉPHANIE DE C——.

"Pas de R. S. V. P."

"Very well," I said to Joseph, when I had twice more perused the neat little three-cornered

"billet-doux." "Will you tell mademoiselle, from me, that I shall not fail to obey her instructions, however difficult; and that, if I don't succeed, she must take the will for the deed. Will you tell her so, or shall I write it?"

"Non, non, monsieur, je m'en chargerai bien, ce n'est pas si difficile après tout que d'être aimable," and with these words he went out.

"Here is indeed food for reflection," I thought, as Joseph shut the door behind him; "that last phrase is worth a mint of gold in a moral sense—'It is not so difficult a task, after all, to be amiable.' Why in England does it appear to be so?

"Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas."

That men here should fail in that charming accomplishment can be understood, if one takes the trouble to enter into the cause of such failure; but that women too should be open to similar reproach is inexplicable. For they have no reason, unless

indeed a new code of manners has sprung up, in which the doctrine that amiability of manner is the criterion of high breeding, as it is the breeder of popularity, has undergone a total change—in fact, so complete a reform as no longer to be traceable.

That amiability which proceeds from disposition, being wholly instinctive, must, of necessity, be limited; but that of manner, which renders the reception of strangers so much less painful, is a mere accomplishment, the want of which simply and absolutely denotes either low birth or defective education. In England there is a common-place belief that every amiable person must be a fool, or very near the mark, if not quite up to it; and the fear of being thought a fool plunges numbers into the other extreme—thus establishing a fact which before was only hinted at. Such people mistake entirely the character of true amiability, which, while it forbids familiarity, and in some does, nay, should delicately point to condescension,

conciliates esteem, respect, and good-will, if not affection. That phrase, "It is not so difficult a task to be amiable," has haunted me ever since it was uttered; and the reader must forgive, therefore, the above disquisition on the subject.

The next thing which occupied my morning's meditation was the little French note I kept twirling round my fingers while thinking over the old butler's sayings.

It was a regular "poulet," as the French denominate pleasant little notes—so French in its form, in its expressions, in its whole: beginning by a cold "monsieur," and having no ending by way of avoiding the stereotyped "agréez l'expression de ma considération distinguée," or some such like formality.

"Monsieur" is a word Englishmen often misunderstand when abroad; it is, perhaps, susceptible of more meanings, that is, of inflexions of voice, than any other in the language, and to a French ear the way it is pronounced is very signi-

ficative. Our short corresponding word "sir," cannot at all render the feelings we experience, according to the inflexion with which that dissyllable is pronounced, expressing earnestness or indifference, and all the consequent never-failing companions of these two important qualities, according as it falls or not on the penult. Besides its conversational significance, the word "monsieur" has a written one also, which, however, is determined by the context of the letter. Seldom—very rarely, indeed—does the word "cher" (dear) accompany Monsieur. A man will write "cher Comte," "cher Marquis," "Monsieur le Duc," but not "cher Monsieur." If very intimate, the French will say, "cher ami," or "cher cousin"—(an extreme mark of esteem); and therein I think they have a decided advantage over us, who, when we write to a man we heartily wish at the bottom of the sea, but with whom it is necessary to "keep up appearances," use invariably "dear Sir;" and to the woman we from the bottom of our soul desire

soon to see in Paradise (?), "dear Mrs. so-and-so."

In a "poulet," French people take flights of fancy, or rather of grammar, they coin words "ils forgent," like the Italians, who are for ever making the objects of their affection infinitesimally small. In that which I got, two words were coined. One, however, rather passed into fashion, namely, "s'endimancher," that is, put on Sunday clothes, look smart, and in France, look clean; "s'endimancher," to born Frenchmen, means that a little more than wetting the eyes with the corner of a towel dipped into water on waking is required of them—that the "débarbouillez-vous" must make room for "lavez-vous."

A pretty word "endimancher," which I should like to see translated into, Anglicè—"sundayize." The other word was "en-soleil-lez-vous," brighten up, sunnify yourself; a word which I make sure was of my friend's fabrication. Then the "si c'est possible," which followed by way of a compliment, a necessary ingredient in all French compositions,

the whole made the note, as a national characteristic epistle, a precious one to me. By the way, talking of compliments, the reader will not, I am sure, grudge my devoting a few lines to the subject, as it forms the constant reproach which we make to the French, a reproach equally unmerited and unfair.

It is a custom inherent to the country, and, therefore, as open to ridicule from us as our shaking hands accompanied by "hallo, old fellow, how are you?" to our fathers, sons, or brothers, after a score of years passed away from them, in India or New-Zealand, is matter of just astonishment to the French: If in France affection is deemed real only when demonstrative, is it a reason why the French should be railed at? Because in England we believe that demonstration denotes hollowness, is it matter for the French to ridicule us? The one is as absurd as the other. In the same way, when we meet a mere acquaintance, our earnest inquiries after his or her health would naturally lead a third person to believe that we were great

friends, especially when this acquaintance happens to have a slight cold, for which we on the spot suggest a number of remedies that more fitting opportunities for being amiable would never have brought to our mind.

This manner of proceeding, what is it but a mere compliment? It means that the anxiety for the other's health is due to the esteem he inspires. Literally speaking, an inquiry of that kind tacitly implies this meaning. That we do not intend it as such is too palpable in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases to suffer contradiction; and hence we must bring ourselves to the acknowledgment that we are either humbugs, or given to compliments, for the above instance is merely one out of a hundred pretty speeches we indulge in in England.

"Oh! but we must be civil," remarks one. And I grant it at once, on condition that the allowance we make to ourselves may be charitably extended across the straits to our French neighbours. Their

complimentary speeches are mere marks of civility, which are staves in the educational course, planted by parents to check the impetuosities of young natures, sometimes too unruly and too prone to offend the sensibilities of those they are destined to live with. Is it not Dr. Johnson who says that a compliment either means that the person who makes it wishes to please or fears to offend—in either of which cases the person who receives the compliment ought to feel much flattered. A conclusion eminently wise and worthy of the great mind from which it sprang.

We are not wroth with the Asiatics for wishing that the "light of our countenances may shine often upon them." Yet, if we could see ourselves when we receive such compliments, we should wish for their sakes that a brighter orb might warm them.

The fact is that we judge of all things according to our English notions; and liberal as we may be in our ideas of self-government, we are emi-

nently conservative in our deportment towards foreigners, for whose differences of character, education, and customs, no allowance can be or ever is made.

But I have tarried too long on this subject, and, while apologising to the reader, I skip over the morning's occupation, which was as interesting as reading, writing, music, and billiards could make it, and at once arrive at the door of the brougham which was to convey us to the Château de L——, the handsome seat of the Marquis de L——.

A brougham is a most agreeable kind of conveyance in town, and when there are only two occupants; but quite the contrary in the country, and when built to hold three—that is, for two to be comfortable, while a third is to sit on the edge of a very small seat, looking at happiness in the eyes of his *vis-à-vis*, without the slightest possibility of enjoying it himself. Such was my case in the present instance. Charming as were the two ladies opposite to me, I felt most restless and un-

comfortable. I did not know how to sit, and was constantly shifting my legs from right to left, inflicting most unwilling kicks first to the mamma, and next to the daughter. Little half kicks, which, as they multiplied, and tried the patience both of the ladies and of myself, considerably disturbed my serenity of temper, and little by little worked me to such a pitch of ire and indignation, that I fain would have administered a real good strong kick to the door of the vehicle, and thus made room for my feet, when Stéphanie called out, "Nous voilà arrivés," and that instant the carriage stopped, and, to the footman's inquiries whether the Marquis de L—— would receive us, we heard the welcome intelligence "Toute la famille y est."

We were shown into a handsome drawing-room, furnished *à la* Louis Quinze, with foot-stools before every chair. The floor was as slippery as a polished oak floor should be when undergoing the daily process of "frottement et cirage;" but I confess that the sight of a carpet is much more con-

genial to my taste, and the icy appearance of the boards we trod upon with such care, had no attraction for me.

After a few moments waiting, the Marquis de L—— entered, a handsome old man, with a long grey beard, in keeping with the snow-whiteness of his hair, rather short, but not the less dignified in his deportment. He went up straight to the Countess, took her hand with both his, and kissed it with a grace younger men must have envied.

"Que vous êtes bonne, chère Comtesse, d'être venue me trouver, et vous aussi, mademoiselle," turning round to Stéphanie, and making her a profound bow, without the shaking of hands which in England would have accompanied the salutation. This old Marquis had known Stéphanie from a child, and, I believe, never from the day when he left off patting her on the head had he shaken hands with her.

How curious, again, is the difference of habit in the two countries! Perhaps the custom is exagge-

rated in both, yet I leave it to the reader's judgment to decide whether it is preferable to abstain from pawing each person one meets, or to give one's hand indiscriminately to every Tom, Jack, or Harry; Jane, Ann, or Susan, one encounters, regardless of the distance which may exist between the shake of the hand and the time when the hand one shakes was last in presence of soap and water.

After this preamble, the old Countess proceeded to introduce me in the following graceful manner:

"Je vous ai amené, Marquis, le petit fils de ce cher Edouard dont la bonté pour nous au temps de notre exile doit vivre dans le cœur de tous ceux qui l'ont jamais connu."

The old man bowed to me with much grace, but with little of that cordiality of manner I had a right to expect after such an introduction. And there and then I understood what to me before had been always a puzzle, namely, that a sense of obligation destroys friendship. The man I was

speaking to owed his education to the kindness of my family, during the great revolution which scattered over England and elsewhere the members of the torn and shattered aristocracy of France, yet this man repaid his debt of gratitude by a mere bow, and by an abuse of England, with which he favoured me afterwards, which so dumbfounded me, that I could not resist hinting at the time when I believed he thought differently.

"Ah! monsieur," he replied, "le vieux temps n'est plus, la généreuse Angleterre a brisé le sceau qui la marquait aux armes de l'honneur, du droit et de la vérité. Vos pères! c'étaient des Dieux. La génération actuelle, c'est l'homme et ses faiblesses."

Complimentary this, I thought, and uncommonly proud and artful. A delicate eulogium to the Englishmen who had benefited him, and a severance of all the ties which linked his obligation for the services of the father to any returns to the son. If the olden times were gone, he

could not revive them—he was not called upon to do so; why should he then adhere to the principles and customs of those times? He was left merely to regret them. Generous England of former days had forfeited her title of generous, because she had seen through the empty-heartedness and true Walpolian sense of the gratitude of those she had befriended. For being wise she was to be loathed; she had nothing more to give, wasn't that sufficient reason for her to be dismissed? But why, because she prudently listened to her own interests in recognizing the nephew of the man she had battled with for a quarter of a century, when weakness and bad government expelled from the throne, a second time, the very men for whom she had spilt her best blood, she should be said to have lost her sense of honour, of right, and of truth, was more than I could dispassionately listen to, and I said as much in answer to the Marquis's remarks.

"You style our forefathers gods," I said; "and

in their name I thank you, for I do not suppose they ever had a chance of doing it for themselves; but why you should so disparagingly speak of the present generation, is to me a matter of much concern." Hereupon, in true French fashion, he avoided the "cul-de-sac" into which I wanted to force him, by dexterously turning the conversation to the policy of England, as instrumental in exciting revolution. "Prodige étonnant! le pays qui seul a pendant vingt-cinq années combattu la Révolution, aujourd'hui l'encourage."

This was said with that peculiar emphasis a man adopts when he thinks he is stating a fact which cannot admit of contradiction.

Perhaps the Marquis de L—— was glad to find in his political bias against England, a pretext for ignoring the favours bestowed upon him by us in former days; and he succeeded so well, that, had he then chosen to speak kindly of the people he had known in earlier times, I should at once have begged of him myself to desist, preferring his hatred to

his love—that is, his jealousy to his condescension.

It is curious to note, in France, how fond people are of politics, and how keenly they discuss them. Seldom is there any other topic, unless the following specimen of what the French call "faire de la conversation sur la pointe d'une aiguille," may be denominated conversation.

While the Marquis was talking, a young man, in a most elaborate dress, with a bow by way of a tie, which extended from one ear to the other, had entered the room, and got into confab with Stéphanie. As soon as the Marquis had silenced me, and had returned to his civilities to the old Countess, I had leisure to throw myself back in my chair and listen to the remarks on the interesting affairs discussed, with much apparent warmth of manner and excitement, between Stéphanie and the young Frenchman:—

"Vous avez là un charmant éventail, mademoiselle."

"Vous trouvez?"

"Parfait, je ne me rappelle pas en avoir vu de pareil."

"Vous êtes par trop bon."

"Peut-on vous demander quel en est l'auteur?"

"De ce petit Cupidon que vous y voyez peint?"

"Et de cette Venus que j'y admire."

"Vous me le demandez, vous qui êtes peintre distingué!"

"J'aime à m'instruire."

"Vous êtes donc studieux?"

"Comme vous."

"Comment savez-vous que je le suis?"

"Parceque je vous sais la réputation d'être la plus instruite des femmes de ce pays."

"Ah! vous êtes par trop aimable."

"Pas plus que vous, mademoiselle."

"Vous ne voulez pas me ceder le pas?"

"Que lorsque vous me le commanderez."

"Eh bien, je vous le commande."

"Obeissons puisque vous le voulez."

Let the reader translate this into English if he

can. For my part I had rather not, for fear of spoiling the delicate nothingness of this instructive dialogue.

At this juncture our party was increased by the arrival of two young ladies, friends of Stéphanie, who made one bound from the door into her arms, and were both round her neck, before my poor friend had time to greet them by their respective names. The eldest of the two, who was much animated, at once started the conversation which follows; and I crave indulgence on account of its characteristic feature.

"Que je suis charmée de te voir, nous avons appris à l'instant ton arrivée—sais-tu que nous devions aller te trouver aujourd'hui même, mais la nouvelle de la mort du pauvre Marquis de G——."

Chorus of all the room.—"Mort!"

Young Lady.—"Oui, oui, mort d'une chute de cheval."

Chorus.—"Pas possible."

Young Lady.—"C'est affreux, n'est-ce pas?"

Chorus.—"Affreux."

Old Countess.—"Ces jeunes gens, c'est par trop téméraires."

Englishman.—"Parcequ'on monte à cheval?"

Old Marquis (taking up cudgels for the Countess).—"Quand on ne sait pas monter."

Young Lady (defending dead man).—"Il était parfait cavalier."

Old Marquis (somewhat grumpy).—"Je ne l'aurais pas crû."

Englishman (inwardly).—"Nor I."

Young Lady (proceeding).—"Et sais-tu la nouvelle—Marie de Langes se marie."

Stéphanie.—"C'est un canard."

Young Lady, No. 2.—"Non, non, c'est très vrai—elle épouse le gros petit Des Outres."

Young Man (punning).—"Quelle outre!"

Chorus.—"Ah, ah, ah!"

Young Man (emboldened).—"Des Outres est une huitre qui ne merite guère une aussi belle perle."

Chorus.—Marks of approbation.

Young Lady, No. 1.—"Mais, François, tu seras bien plus étonné d'apprendre que Marie d'Arbelle se fait religieuse."

Young Man (not wishing to betray himself).—"Elle a assez longtemps, donné sa beauté au Diable, il est temps qu'elle la donne au Ciel."

Countess (to old Marquis).—"Votre fils est de bonne humeur aujourd'hui, mais je m'aperçois qu'il fait tard, et nous dinons ce soir chez les de B. Soyez assez bon pour faire appeler mon carrosse."

General move—young man rings, and when servant appears, old Marquis orders, "Les gens de Madame la Comtesse."

"Les gens" consisted of a ghastly-looking footman, whose every move indicated fear lest he should not do honour to his mistress's training, and the "carrosse" was the uncomfortable brougham I have already mentioned.

When fairly in motion, the conversation began by a criticism of the people we had just visited.

"How charming they all are!" remarked the old Countess.

"So amiable!" echoed her daughter.

"Si spirituels," said the mother.

"Si subtils," answered Stéphanie.

"The old Marquis is of true French metal," continued the eldest of my companions.

"The young man is such a correct type of 'le jeune homme noble,'" observed the youngest.

"Then his sisters, they are so graceful!" noticed the Countess.

"And so artless," added my fair friend.

This little dialogue between mother and daughter would have gone on much longer, had I not thought it time to interpose, by a partial acquiescence with the opinions they expressed, so far as they were personally concerned; but, I said,

"You must allow me to differ with you as regards myself. My English blood is evidently a barrier, which effectually shuts me out of their sympathy."

"Why so?" observed the Countess.

"Why?" exclaimed Stéphanie, "because pride is ever an obstacle to the 'laissez-aller' of friendly intercourse; and do what you will, there is in the best of you English an innate haughtiness of blood, which is felt, and wounds, though I grant its being unintentional."

"You surprise me," I replied, "and I hope that you do not allude to anything in my demeanour which may have hurt the feelings of your friends."

"No,—but,—you know,—it is in you—that national poker which props you up and stiffens every limb, while it gives to the countenance a seriousness we fain would not see."

"I confess, mademoiselle, I do not altogether seize your meaning."

"Well, never mind; here we have arrived at the de B.'s Smile more, be a little more complimentary, and don't take offence."

At this moment we drove up before a magnificent castellated mansion of the period of

Louis XI. At any other time the splendid proportions of this noble pile would have absorbed my attention; the grim look of the battlements would have fired my romantic fancy, the dull appearance of the towers would have raised my fears, and the sullen aspect of the dried-up moat would have kindled my imagination; but Stéphanie's words were more powerful than these, and the earnestness with which I was studying the differences of character between the two nations, found in them another key to the impossibility of ever arriving at a perfect understanding of race.

In plain words, she meant to say that Society, as the French understand it, is a conventional and limited time, during which no cloud is ever permitted to disturb the sunshine which is to light the countenance, no sign of discontent is to vex the interlocutor, not a word of blame is to pass through the lips; society is liveliness, absolute mastership of all sentiments, and, let us say the word, a moment-

ary hypocrisy. A pleasing one, no doubt, but one to which the very essence of our nature is adverse. When the day comes, and Englishmen are able to hear their country abused with a bland smile playing all the while upon their face, themselves depreciated, with a broad grin on their lips, that day we may bid adieu to the truthfulness of disposition, the honesty of purpose, the openness of intercourse, of which at present we are so justly proud.

An Englishman scorns a lie and every phasis of it—a foreigner courts favour at its expense. Nor is this ignored in France, for I remember well the words of a celebrated French surgeon, le Dr. M——, Chirurgien en Chef de l'Hôtel Dieu at Paris. "Monsieur," said he, "la parole d'un Anglais vaut sa signature.—We know that both are equally binding in his mind—we trust the one as implicitly as we depend upon the other."

Whilst pondering over the above reflections, the huge entrance gate had been closed behind us,

the gigantic door of the castle had revolved on its hinges, and we had become the prisoners of a most amiable set of people. I was at once greeted with an affability my first visit had somewhat led me not to expect; but I recollected that the family we were now with owed mine nothing, and that every civility of which I might, as a stranger, be the object, was an obligation received, not conferred.

The son, a young officer in the "Garde Impériale," home on leave from his regiment, devoted himself specially to me. He took me up the never-ending steps of the spiral tower in which his apartments were situated, and entertained me by his lively sallies, his fund of information, his anecdotes "du regiment," until the bell announced dinner to be on the table. Once alone he touched upon something like serious talk, when, dipping, as it were into the future, he expressed with a half kind of sigh his fear that the old days of Bourbon had seen their last.

The necessity, every day greater, of procuring occupation for the present generation of Legitimists, and the sole resource of the army wherein to satisfy that necessity, brings little by little every man under the control of the Imperial rule, and nails him to the tricolour flag with all the strength that military honour, discipline, and loyalty can lend.

Our dinner was quite a family affair; the party was composed of the Bishop of ——, a very venerable, amiable man; his chaplain, Monsieur l'Abbé de ——, a man of somewhat dry, tart constitution; La Marquise de B——, our gracious hostess; Mlle de B——, her well-conditioned spinster daughter; Le Marquis de B——, the father, a square fellow, of odd temperament, the young officer and ourselves.

The conversation during the repast was as lively as the joyously-disposed humour of the guests could render it; but nothing of any note deserving to be recalled in these pages was said, unless,

indeed, my depreciation of the jack-boots of Louis XVI.'s time, which I had seen worn by the postillons at Bourg-Achard—heavy machines, resembling huge elephants' legs, weighing at least twelve pounds avoirdupois, and which it is impossible for a stranger to look at without laughing—merits a transitory notice, on account of the defence of them vigorously made and elaborately argued by le Marquis de B——, the grand pith and burthen of whose reasoning was—"Que si le cheval tombe, le postillon reste sain et sauf, ne pouvant se remuer."

It would only be acting up to a continuation of this sage principle to walk the streets in complete armour, to avoid being hurt, if run over.

Having some way to drive, we left early after dinner, and when we reached the Landin another day of pleasure had died out, and left behind it as pleasant a recollection as the rest.

Chapter VII.

AN IDEA—REALISED—JUMIÉGES—IMPRESSION—CLOISTER LOST—MORTUARY STONES—MEETING AGAIN—REGULAR JOHN BULL—MESNIL-SOUS-JUMIÉGES—AGNES SOREL—MARRIAGE COMPARISONS.

CHAPTER VII.

IT struck me on waking that it was odd that nearly a week had passed since I had gazed with such delight on the beautiful ruins visible from my windows, and that not once had I asked my fair companion to take me to see them. It is true that so various had been our occupations since my arrival, that I could not recall a moment which might have been devoted to the visit I had at heart, notwithstanding my silence on the subject of my wishes. When, however, the faithful old butler made his appearance, I asked him whether he thought there was a chance of visiting Jumiéges shortly.

"Tiens, c'est drôle," said he, "mademoiselle m'envoie dire à monsieur qu'il doit être prêt à onze

heures, parce que l'intention de mademoiselle est de mener voir Jumiéges à monsieur."

Another instance of that electricity of thought of which I spoke at the outset of this volume—the idea of visiting the ruins had probably crossed my mind at the very time when Stéphanie was giving instructions for the carrying out of those wishes she could not know I was forming.

"Quelle chance!" I replied; "veuillez dire à mademoiselle qu'elle a deviné ma pensée."

Punctually at eleven Stéphanie and I started on our way down the verdant slope which leads from the house to the Seine, and found a boat in readiness to take us a distance of about a mile up the river, to the place we had selected for the day's enjoyment. On landing at the village of Jumiéges we at once proceeded to the Abbey; and faint, indeed, must be to those who have not seen these magnificent ruins, any conception which may be formed of their grandeur from the description of them which may be attempted.

They stand alone in their majesty, and, by a strange reversion of the order of things, they captivate the imagination by recalling to mind that they are the work of human art, unaided and unadorned by nature's beauties. And as if nature were jealous of her not having been consulted in the erection of so noble a pile, she has sown on its crumbling remnants, wild flowers and creeping mosses, to clothe, as it were, the skeleton fabric of former piety and former pride.

The silence in which one revels on entering this old Abbey is a kind of respectful tribute to the past, which is almost exacted by the dim shadows of departed life, which the very appearance of the walls seems to revive. The tongue is tied; and the admiration within, buoyant in its anxiety to communicate itself to others, is kept down by an invisible power, and only vents itself in whispers and broken sentences.

Is it because at the sight we are reminded of the reality of life, in its pain, its troubles, its suffer-

ings, its mortifications? Or is it because they point to a similar fate in the future, however brilliant the present may seem? I know not. Certain it is that never yet have I gazed upon any ruins without remembering and feeling the truth of those beautiful words of Christopher North:

"Ruins show us the footsteps of time and oblivion, coming on in their everlasting and irresistible career, to sweep down our perishable race, and to reduce all the forms of our momentary being into the indistinguishable elements of their original nothing."

Of the extensive character which this Abbey once possessed, but a faint notion can at present be formed; but the proportions of such parts of the building as are still erect, point to the magnitude of what once constituted "l'Abbaye royale de Jumiéges."

Historically speaking, it creates an interest which few other monasteries of the kind excite, having from its foundation been the constant abode

of talent and royalty. Here, our own Edward the Confessor was educated with that care and perfection which resulted in the foundation of Westminster Abbey. Here, Harold unconsciously betrayed his own country by an oath. Here, Tassillon, Duke of Bavaria, sought oblivion after the annihilation of his power by Charlemagne. Here, Charles VII. endeavoured in vain to forget that an English Sovereign was seated on the throne which he should have graced. Here, the beautiful Agnes Sorel turned to the glory and to the freedom of her country the love she inspired in her king.

Tradition reports that two sons of Clovis, who had rebelled against their father, had, by way of punishment for their crime, the nerves of their feet and legs either cut or burnt, which earned for them the name of "Enervés" (nerveless), given to them by posterity, and were thus thrown into a boat, which floated down the Seine, a distance of sixty leagues, to Jumiéges. They were taken up, and cared for by the prior of the monastery, and

found there in repentance and prayer a simultaneous end to their sufferings.

This Abbey was founded in 654, by St. Philibert, on its present site, which he obtained from Clovis II., and his wife the saintly Bathilda. It was burnt down by the Normans in 841, and was rebuilt a few years after by Guillaume Longue-Epée, successor of Rollo, Duke of Normandy; and it is this building of which one now admires the majestic remains. The Chapel of the Blessed Virgin, however, was only built two centuries later. The cloister, built in 1530, of which not a vestige remains, contained the "Salle des Gardes" of Charles VII., which was 102 feet long and 33 wide. The Abbey and all its appertainings now belong to a stock-broker, M. Pelcontet, whose riches, good taste, and antiquarian researches have enabled him to save from further dilapidation the ruins of this once most celebrated monastery, to preserve untouched the pillars and arches which had escaped the destructive spirit of the authors of the Revolu-

tion of 1790, and to collect in a museum of paramount interest all the relics which he has been able to ascertain as having once been the property of the Benedictine owners of the Abbey.

M. Pelcontet informed us that, notwithstanding every possible inquiry as to the fate of the cloister, he had never been able to ascertain how or when it was destroyed. He believed that about the time of the great revolution, every stone being numbered previously, it had been removed entire to England, and secreted there in some part of the country, but where, no one yet had been successful in finding. Strange as the statement may seem, the man who made it had too much at heart the subject on which he spoke, to allow one to question the value of the grounds on which he founded his hypothesis. Is it so? Numerous inquiries, and an appeal to "Notes and Queries," have failed to elicit. Is it not so? No one can deny as long as no proof to the contrary has been adduced. The fact is curious enough to call forth attention, for

it is impossible that a whole cloister should be removed without hopes of recovering traces of it at some future time.

The reader must have perceived that I am no hand at architectural descriptions, and he will, therefore, excuse me if I refer him on that subject to a most ably-written book, entitled "Histoire de l'Abbaye Royale de Jumiéges, par C. A. Deshayes," published at Rouen in 1829, and which contains almost every information he can desire on the history of the place and its architectural merits.

There are few mortuary stones, but three in particular deserve notice. One recalls the questionable story of "Les Enervés," to which I have already alluded; another the doubtful merits of l'Abbé Nicholas, who was the great ally of the Duke of Bedford, and sat as one of the judges in the trial which terminated in the consignment of Jeanne d'Arc to the flames; a third, the charms of "la belle Agnes," "la belle des belles,"

known variously as Soreau, Seurelle, Surelle, Surette, and more commonly as Sorelle. On finding a portrait of her in an album belonging to Madame de Boissy, wife of his old preceptor, Arthur de Boissy, Comte d'Etampes; François I. wrote the following lines to her praise:—

"Plus de louange et d'honneur tu mérite,
La cause étant de France recouvrer,
Que ce peult dedans un cloître ouvrer,
Close nonnain ou bien dévot hermite."

Though not altogether free from blame, the faults of this beautiful mistress of an unfortunate monarch deserve to be overlooked, inasmuch as she never made use of her power with the king except for doing good.

"Voulez-vous voir la maison qu' habitait Agnes," said Stéphanie, after we had spent some three hours in the delightful admiration of all we saw in this place.

"Let's go at once," was my only answer; and, as we left the ruins, we were joined by two friends

of Stéphanie's, who volunteered to escort us. We had hardly gone a few yards, when whom should I see coming up in our direction, and looking as blooming as she did on the boat, but the little governess who had so kindly volunteered to tell me everything about the country between Rouen and La Bouille. I presented her to Stéphanie; and while she and her friends went "en avant," the little governess and myself followed in the wake.

"Qu'est ce qui vous amène dans ces parages, mademoiselle?" I began.

"Mon Dieu! rien, une idée, une folie."

"I don't consider it a folly, since it has been the means of seeing you again."

"Allons, c'est parfait, mais pourquoi n'êtes vous pas venu me voir?"

"Because I thought visits in France to young ladies were considered infradigue."

"So they are; but you might have tried all the same. As an Englishman, you would have been excused."

"And put down as an ignoramus."

"You can't help nature."

"Thank you."

"I mean to say that if it is not in the character of the nation to do as others do, why, then, each individual is not responsible for the faults which he shares in common with his fellow-countrymen."

"But it so happens that I did abide by your customs, and not mine; and why do you therefore reproach me?"

"Regular John Bull!"

"What do you mean?"

"Are there not other means of comprehension than words?"

"Of course there are; but what have they to do with the present subject?"

"Everything."

"Well, I must be thick-headed, for I don't see it."

"If you don't, I can't tell it you."

"Why not?"

"Because 'ces choses là ne se disent pas, elles se comprennent.'"

"You are very mysterious, upon my word."

"Am I?"

"Ay! that you are."

"I am sorry for it, for I can assure you I mean no mystification whatever."

"Now, my dear little friend, do, for the sake of my ignorance, enlighten me."

"Parceque cela m'eut fait plaisir! voyons, est-ce que vous ne pouviez pas voir cela sans me forcer à vous le dire?" and then, quickly checking herself, she added—"Cela m'eut fait plaisir parceque vous eussiez par là complimenter mon savoir en venant le courtiser."

"Well, I confess I am in error; but circumstances, not my will, ruled my actions and time. But how true is what you have just observed—we English certainly do not help thought, or understand half expressions. Is it that we are too

matter-of-fact, or that our intellect is slower than that of foreigners?"

"Neither; 'mais tous vous cherchez midi à 14 heures, une poutre ou il n'y a qu'une aiguille, l'Etna où il n'y a qu'une colline.' You ever believe that some momentous reason is actuating each one with whom you converse; and you are for ever quarrelling with the foreigners you meet, because their characters are different from your own, and because they happen to be French, German, Russian, what not, instead of English. The slightest chaff, the least joke, a mere 'trait d'esprit,' upsets you, and you immediately conceive that it prefaces a mine, and that you must, therefore, put yourself on your guard; whereas it can only be likened to the report of a cork from a bottle of champagne, which is the forerunner of some excellent Veuve Cliquot. Be less suspicious and less diffident, and you will appreciate things more justly, and not believe that civility portends some interested designs."

"Oh! mademoiselle," I exclaimed.

"Silence!" she said; "nous voici arrivés."

And so we had, at a place called Menil-sous-Jumiéges, a small village which only deserves notice as having been graced by the presence of Agnes Sorel.

The house where she died has naturally been much altered both by time and to suit the wants of the farmer in whose hands it subsequently fell, and to whose descendants it belongs even to this day. The walls, however, still exist, and likewise the Gothic windows through which her bright eyes often peeped.

Great was my delight in gazing at this old house, which I should think must have been a small part only of the mansion erected by Charles VII. to the fairest of the fair; and, though alive to the fact that she was, literally speaking, the mistress of the king, and consequently not entitled to that respect which is claimed by a wife, yet I felt a kind of indescribable feeling of love mingled

with pity and admiration for one who so nobly used the influence of which she was possessed, and so completely denied herself for the sake of her country.

The little governess and Stéphanie's friends here parted company with us, and my fair guide and myself made back for our boat. We had hardly got a few yards on our way home down the river, carried gently by the current, when we heard a voice singing most dolefully lines containing the following sentiment:

"Avant de vous marier,
Apprenez à travailler."

The peculiar strain, the sound sense conveyed in the words, the excellent moral which the lines contained, all made us pause on our oars and reflect. For the first time the word "marry" was pronounced within our hearing, and for the first time we felt it incumbent upon us to discuss its meaning.

How differently the two countries understand the word! In France marriage is the establishment of woman's freedom; in England, that of woman's dependence. Abroad, marriages are mostly "got up," as the expression goes; in England they are for the most part the results of personal inclination. On the one hand love has little or nothing to do with them; on the other almost, if not absolutely, all. Which system tends most to procure happiness, the inexperienced cannot determine; but the observer would incline to think, after some consideration, that "le mariage de convenance" has the advantage in this respect, that it prevents the numerous ills which "le mariage d'inclination" often brings if it is not well-matched, "bien assorti." A constant living in the society of one another finishes in the end by creating a species of love, which, if not passionate, is strong enough to establish mutual confidence and reciprocity of sympathies, the better linked that no law can sever the ties which the Sacrament has formed.

In England, where, in most cases, inclination rules supreme, the most that can be hoped is a similar trust in each other after the first ebullitions of passionate love have been expended, and when, after the wounds inflicted by Cupid's darts have been healed, the woes and troubles of this too real life begin to tell their tale. But whereas in this case the confidence becomes questionable, since it much depends on the character of either party, in the other there is certainty, inasmuch as matters have been provided for before even love has had time to make its way.

Again, as matters connected with matrimony in France are entirely arranged by the parents, each family becomes in a way responsible for the happiness of the young people they have selected, and in either the newly-married couple may find a home.

"L'esprit de famille" is infinitely stronger in France than it is in England, simply on this account; and whilst in our country a girl leaves

her home to live entirely with the man she has chosen to be her lord and master, without much hope of ever seeing again any family but that which she may create for herself, the French girl "se retrouve dans le sein de sa famille femme, et non plus jeune fille, mais toujours l'objet des soins féminins auxquels elle a toujours été habituée."

As to determining, however, which of the two modes of becoming man and wife is the most agreeable, there can be, it would seem, no question; yet if the sublimity of love is to be so soon disturbed by the ridiculous interference of temporal matters after marriage, it becomes a serious question whether or not it is better to bridle one's feelings until the affairs of this earth earthly have been satisfactorily settled. Unless this is done, one is open to say and feel like the man who loved his wife so dearly before he married her, that he could "have eaten her up, and had never had but one regret since—that he had not done so."

The old French saying,

"Marions-nous, marions-nous,
Mettons-nous la corde au cou,"

applies in France to the men only, for nothing strikes a stranger so forcibly as the wonderful change that comes over the timid, bashful, and silent girl he has known, when the benediction of the church has united her destinies to those of a man she is in future to call "her husband." Timidity, bashfulness, silence, all disappear like magic. A veil is torn asunder, and reveals a second nature, to which one had never looked, or which one had even hardly ever suspected.

The young lady who never danced but quadrilles, takes to waltzing with all the men she has ever known; and she who, a fortnight before, dared hardly answer for herself when asked to join in a set of "lancers," allows herself to be whisked round, "ad libitum," by each one, and every man, because she chances to be "madame," and no longer "mademoiselle"; though, in some cases, as I have seen myself, they are "mesdames"

of one week's standing only. To use the slang expression, "they go the whole hog" after marriage, and it is palpable that this cannot be a system productive of any particular good. The French, however, are so accustomed to put in force the axiom, "Faut que jeunesse s'amuse," that it seldom happens that these gay, frolicksome young women do not in the end recede into the ranks of pious and respectable matrons, after having expended all their mirth and fun.

Our system, however, is peculiar to our own country, and, like our other institutions, is essentially congenial to our natures. But we must not believe that, because, in our eyes, nothing can be superior to this system, its import into another country is to be desired. Each system must be adapted to the character of the people for whom it is planned, and what is essentially good for one, becomes essentially bad for another; the moral to be deduced from all this being, that English ways of thinking are as incompatible with French ways

as these are with ours, and that the best plan is ever to try respectively to better one's own institutions, should they be found at all defective.

The above formed the grounds of our conversation in the boat; and when we reached the "Landin," the bell announced that we had only just returned in time for dinner.

I would pass over this meal, were it not for a regular sprightly French conversation which occurred, one of those essays at wit which the French are constantly trying, and which would prove dull and flat at an English table.

Three or four young men, cousins of the family, had been asked to join their quotum to our number; and one of them, a particularly lively youngster, between seventeen and nineteen, taking up his glass and filling it with water, asked his neighbour why that glass resembled Stéphanie?

"Je n'en sais rien, ou mieux je ne saurai le dire," replied the man addressed.

"Eh bien, je vous le dirai: parceque ce ver est

d'un crystal transparent qui reflêt une eau pure, comme le teint frais de Mademoiselle découvre la beauté de son ame."

"Bravo!" greeted this pretty compliment.

"Pourquoi, Mademoiselle, est-elle comme cette fourchette?" asked another.

"Parceque la blancheur de ses dents ressemble à l'argent pur que contient cette fourchette, et que ses qualités transcendantes ont le pouvoir de percer les cœurs sans leur donner l'espoir de se dégager; comme cette fourchette qui ne lâche pas prise aux victimes dont elle s'empare."

"Pourquoi Mademoiselle est-elle comme ce couteau?" immediately asked a third, whose vanity was roused, and who did not wish to be behindhand with his friends.

"Parceque les charmes de Mademoiselle font des incisions profondes dont on ne peut se guérir. Ce couteau, à lame parfaitement aiguisée, fend en deux l'obstacle qui s'oppose à lui, et l'on ne peut raccommoder ce que l'on a fendu."

"Pourquoi Mademoiselle est-elle comme ce plat?" I asked, my national pride being roused.

"Le plat lui-même? ou ce qu'il contient?" asked the three young men.

"Ce qu'il contient," I replied. "Dites."

"Parceque l'on ne peut y resister. Il attire par sa bonté, et quand on l'a gouté, on veut toujours l'avoir: de même quand on a une fois eu le bonheur de connaître Mademoiselle, l'on ne peut vivre heureux qu'en la revoyant toujours."

"Eh bien, messieurs, c'est très joli tout cela," said Stéphanie, "mais dites-moi, pourquoi ressemblez-vous tous à la seule chose que vous ayez omise, des assiettes?"

"Nous n'en savons rien."

"Parceque vous savez remplir ce qui est vide de sa nature."

Let any one ask at an English dinner-table why so-and-so is like a fork, a knife, a glass, a dish (omitting spoons, which, for some reason, do not

appear to be complimentary instruments), and I question whether they would receive so saucy a reply.

Chapter VIII.

A RECOLLECTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCE—BLUNDERS—PARIS IS NOT FRANCE—FRENCH CLERGY—SUNDAY—BOWS—A PSYCHOLOGICAL DISSERTATION.

CHAPTER VIII.

I AWOKE earlier than usual, that is, before Joseph's knock at my door apprised me that it was time to bid farewell to slumbers however soft, to dreams however pleasant, and to that happy oblivion which is the greatest charm of sleep. Strange to say, I was no longer full of anticipations, as on the first morning of my arrival, but a kind of feeling of dissatisfaction, mingled with uncertainty as to the possible cause of it, oppressed me; and whilst I was passing over in my mind the various emotions of the preceding day, in the hope of finding in them the true source of my discontent, the following passage, from Mr. Augustus St. John's book, entitled, "There

and Back Again in Search of Beauty," presented itself, I know not why, to my memory:

"The Englishman is not without deep emotions, but his pride overshadows and conceals them. He stands upon earth as if he did not belong to it, and as if everything worth emotion. were elsewhere. Yet he feels and burns within, and has the passion of fifty foreigners compressed in his cold heart."

Is this true, and to be accepted as the mature conclusion of a sound judgment and an observing mind? Is the Englishman really capable of deep emotions, those emotions which proceed from the heart, in reference to our fellow-creatures, and are entirely severed from all connection with self, in so far, at least, as our individual natures can be separated from the emotion experienced? Does not a too constant habit of concealing emotions when felt lead insensibly to their total extinction? Habit is a terrible scourge at times, for it is seldom unaccompanied by indifference, the

deadliest weapon which can be wielded against the dictates of the heart. There is not a passion however strong, there is not a feeling however powerful, that cannot be mastered, tamed down, deadened by habit. Time alone is required; for habit implies space, and the constant exercise of the will in the pursuit of a particular object constitutes habit. If, therefore, we are for ever checking the impulses of our nature, if we accustom ourselves to curb them by our will, we dull, as it were, the edge of their blade, we distil from their fangs the poison they contain, we deaden their power; and the influence we dreaded once gone, never returns. An emotion is a strong impulse which fires the whole nature, and if we bridle it and master it once, it never can return with the same intensity; it recoils, as it were, within us, and aims a stroke at our power of feeling, which, if often repeated, must in the end annihilate that power, and replace the void created by an all-absorbing care of self.

No wonder, then, that the man so affected "stands upon earth as if he did not belong to it!" There is no longer that within him to attach him to the earth; for it is not a little curious that selfishness is a burden to itself, and exists only when in presence of that at which it may grasp to gratify itself. Mr. St. John admits that the Englishman's heart is cold; how then can he, in the same phrase, and consistently with his own acknowledgment, say that that cold heart has within it the passion of fifty foreigners?

It is not saying much for foreigners, and yet peoples in the midst of whom have risen and grown such admirable institutions as those which acknowledge a Vincent de Paul for their founder, are, it would seem, little deserving of being compared with the fiftieth part of an Englishman in matters relating to the heart and its emotions. If the maxim of the tree being judged by its fruit be unquestionably true, the Sisters of Charity alone would prove the purity of the source from which

they spring, the powerfully rooted and all-absorbing love of his fellow-creatures which was the eminent characteristic of their founder. Granted that the Englishman feels deeply, but the very education he receives helps to use out that feeling, as it were, by an incessant war against the impulse which fain would render his feelings outwardly evident. Whether the training which produces such results is essentially good or eminently productive of harm, it would be presumption in me to decide. That it is, on the other hand, conducive to the happiness both of others and of oneself to give way entirely to the emotions we are doomed to experience variously, I am not prepared to admit; and no doubt the old axiom,

"In medio tutissimus ibis,"

may very properly come in here to help us to a satisfactory solution of the question. But that a cold manner, indicating a cold heart, is significative of an inward fire burning with an intensity which the aggregate sparkling emotions visible in fifty

foreigners cannot equal, appears to me such a piously foolish belief, that I crave at once permission to be sceptical on that score.

Why or wherefore my thoughts took on waking so metaphysical a turn, is more than I can explain; unless, indeed, there be some truth in the belief that no time of the day is so congenial to meditation as the early morning. The fact is, that Stéphanie's allusions to my English defects had, in a measure, goaded me to an examination of their nature; and that whilst I considered the objections raised against them, I could not be blind to the great kindness of which I was the recipient, nor help seeing that there was as much heart in the demonstrative expressions of friendship shown me, as ever I had discovered in more frigid temperaments. Then, again, the above served to lull the dissatisfaction I had experienced, by pointing to the true cause of it—my "bévue" of two days before. I. had shown temper, and it had been noticed.

In France, and amid the circle in which I was living, this was tantamount to a breach of etiquette, and I felt in consequence. Anyone who, in the course of his or her life has committed a blunder (and I take it each one of us has been more or less guilty of a little social misdemeanour in the way implied by that word), must admit that the immediate result is a kind of personal discomfort which it takes a long time to shake off. And the process employed in trying to get rid of this "bone in the throat" is rather amusing. Reason is first called upon to prove that the blunder has not been committed; most powerful arguments are brought to bear against the possibility of our being in fault; and after being our own prosecutors, our own advocates, we finish by establishing ourselves as our own judges, and boldly return a verdict of "not guilty," when our consciences are all along whispering the contrary to our ears.

An appeal then takes place from Reason to the Court of Common Sense; and there being no pos-

sibility here of blinding ourselves by eloquence, we are doomed to answer by a plain yes or no, the question as to our guilt or our innocence. The verdict is ever the same—the words invariably alike—"You are guilty, and have made a fool of yourself." This once acknowledged, there is no longer any bone in the throat, though there remains a little soreness, by way of proof that the bone has been there. That soreness we rub out by a blush, a laugh at ourselves, and a firm determination to avoid similar stupidities in future.

This latter resolution I at once took, and I had completely recovered my normal serenity of temper when Joseph made his usual appearance.

"Well, Joseph," I said, "what are we to do to-day?"

"Ah, monsieur, je n'en sais rien, on ne fait pas grande chose le Dimanche à la campagne."

"No more one does," I replied, and a retrospect-

ive view of Sundays in English country-houses did not in any way serve to cheer me up.

"La messe est à onze heures, le salut à trois, le diner à six."

This was said with a smile, as much as to say—You know what to expect, act in consequence.

I did act accordingly. I did go to mass at eleven; and whatever may be said of Parisian want of religion, nothing could be more edifying than the pious demeanour of the little Norman congregation assembled on this Sunday in the church of the Landin.

It used to be said once, and probably with truth, "Paris, c'est la France." I doubt the accuracy of the statement now. Paris is no more France than France is Paris, and he shows a very slight acquaintance with the French character who denies to twenty-seven out of the thirty-seven millions of inhabitants of which France is composed a strong Catholic feeling, in the religious sense which that word implies when placed in

juxtaposition with Protestantism. If, in former times, the very Catholic spirit which reigned in Paris caused Henri IV. to abjure his creed at St. Denis because he thought that "Paris valait bien une messe," present monarchs need not have recourse to so much self-sacrifice; but the spirit which then reigned in the capital is now as strong and as vivid in the nation at large. Whatever his own opinions may be as an individual, the ruler of France, be he emperor, king, or president, must not forget that the country at the head of which he is placed, is "la fille ainée de l'Eglise," and that he has on that score duties incumbent upon him which cannot be disregarded.

Of all the Catholic nations of the Continent, I think it may be safely asserted, without fear of contradiction, that none are stronger than France in the religion they profess; for, unlike those in more southern climes, there is an absence of superstition, which constitutes a moral strength, the effects of which are palpable.

In England we are very apt to believe that the effects of the great Revolution, in its attacks against religion, have not died away yet; and, to a certain extent, the belief is substantiated by the fearful atheistic tendencies visible in the large towns, and especially in the capital; but we are entirely in the wrong if we believe that the peasantry are still infected in the same way. Under the influence of an Ecclesiastical body, forty thousand strong, the old ideas have disappeared, and have made room for the more soothing and congenial influences of religion. The clergy alone have brought about this regeneration, and a word on their score may not here prove out of place.

It is a complimentary fact that out of such an enormous body of priests as are constantly exercising the function of the priesthood in France, and notwithstanding the keen "espionnage" to which their individual conduct is subjected on the part of the press generally, and of "Le Siècle" and

"L'Opinion Nationale" in particular, no larger average than 1 per 1500 cases of misconduct is recorded yearly. Example unquestionably speaks more powerfully than words however eloquent, and the above statistical fact clearly proves that the French clergy act up to the doctrines it is their duty to preach.

Their complete abnegation of everything which constitutes the comfort of a home for the sake of their flock—the sacrifice absolute and entire of self, to rescue their fellow-creatures from pain, anxiety, and misery—their obedience to the calls of the duty, which is well impressed upon them during their three years hard apprenticeship at the seminaries, fully entitle them to the confidence with which they are rewarded, to the influence which they justly exercise; and, to use the words of Mr. Newman, "Out of the ashes of the ancient Church of France has sprung a new hierarchy, worthy of the name and the history of that nation, as fervent as their St. Bernard, and as tender as their St.

Francis, and as enterprising as their St. Louis, and as loyal to the Holy See as their Charlemagne."

After breakfast, Stéphanie repaired to her schools, and I, with the old Countess, walked in the garden, and basked in the rays of the sun.

"How strange it is, Comtesse," I remarked, after a few insignificant and preliminary observations, "that even in France, where the greatest license is permitted on a Sunday, there should exist in country-houses the same mournful dulness which we experience in England."

"You would not find it so in any of the upstart families of the present *régime*," replied the Countess; "but you must bear in mind that "l'enjouement' is the follower of the present, and 'le serieux' that of the past. You must not seek in tradition the oblivion you find in modern times —that is, you must not expect, from the memory which recalls regret, that cheerful forgetfulness of care which forms an essential part of the youthful character of 'la France d'aujourd'hui.' Note

that you are in a house which has seen its day, not that sees it—that has lived in the past, and exists only in the present—that is replete with traditions, and is, therefore, the abode of regret, not of pleasure.

'*Chaque age a ses plaisirs, son esprit et ses mœurs,*'

observes Boileau; and dull as this house is, and as you may find it, don't make it a reason for regretting your having come to see us, or you'll almost make me regret that I am not a Bonapartiste, in order that you might enjoy all the freshness inherent to novelty."

Such a speech was unanswerable, and I resorted to a bow only, in acknowledgment of the delicate compliment which prefaced the sarcastic sense of the last phrase. By-the-by, has it ever occurred to any of my readers to study the language of bows? In some countries it is very important and significative—as in Spain, in the East, and in olden France.

As a rule, a bow always indicates respect; and

the lower it is made, the more respectful is its meaning. The sense of this must be innate in us, since the wildest savages prostrate themselves before their chief, because instinct points to such a proceeding as the only means of showing deference. The salaams of the Mahomedans are only exaggerations of our curtsies, as our nods are only abbreviations of our bows. In the same way salaams are diminutives of the lying on one's stomach of the savages, and of the licking the feet of the dogs. But from the curtsy to the nod, there are many intervening modes of bowing which indicate pleasure or pain, seriousness or playfulness, regard or contempt, affability or temper, respect or condescension. Thus, a Frenchman bows his head to a level with his knees when presented to Royalty, to a bishop, or to a grandee, and reaches his normal position again as an erect being, without moving from the spot which he has selected to make his "révérence." If presented to a lady, he brings his left hand, holding his hat, on a level

with his heart, and bowing his head to a level with his hand thus placed, rises quickly, throwing on one side the left hand, as if to say, "If you don't accept my heart, I'll throw it away!" and giving a little kick with the right foot, signifying that in presence of such charms a man cannot feel steady. Should perchance the lady give her hand, the favoured cavalier must seize it gently with the right hand, and, if no hat encumbers him, with both hands, and kiss it. These bows are generally made with a serious countenance.

Next comes the "salut de convenance," which is performed by a low inclination of the head, a frown, and an immediate observation to one's next neighbour on something or another, it does not matter what; then "le salut de négation," in which one retrenches himself when another has said anything he doesn't believe, yet doesn't choose to contradict. Here a broad grin comes into play. "Le salut de jeune fille," is accomplished by a low bending of the body, at the same time lifting up the head,

somewhat inclined to the left, with raised eyelids, and a suppressed smile curling a little the upper lip. "Le salut de refus" necessitates a little jerk of the head forwards, whilst the smile of regret is preparing; then a drawing in of the head, accompanied by a nervous little movement of the hand. "Le salut hautain" requires very little bending, and no stooping whatever. "Le salut familier" is but a smile; "le salut de condescendance" is a nod.

Nearly the same degrees stand good for the women, except in the first and principal degrees, when a deep curtsy is made, first at the feet of the important personage, whoever he or she may be, next in the middle of the room, and lastly at the door. Finally, there is another bow, which might be termed the dipping bow, and which the French call "l'accolade," that is, "le salut de reconnaissance," which takes place mostly in public thoroughfares between friends who have not met for a long time, when each dips his head on to the

other's shoulder, and promptly bobs again on the other side.

Queen Marie Antoinette was celebrated for the wonderful manner in which by a simple bow she could give each one his or her due, according to their rank, in presence of all the Court, without showing partiality or favour—an art the acquirement of which appears now-a-days to have lost much of its value.

Unless one has some notion of the value attached to these particular modes of recognition in French society, one is exposed to many misunderstandings, the clearing up of which very seldom takes place until it is too late.

At three, as Joseph had said, we all repaired to church once more; and at dinner the Curé, and the juvenile ecclesiastic, Monsieur Paulin, added their company to our homely party of three. The conversation assumed somewhat of a metaphysical turn; and as this chapter may in some measure claim to be metaphysical, I need perhaps

not make excuses for reporting the substance of their conversation.

"Quel beau sermon vous nous avez fait ce matin, Monsieur le Curé," observed the Countess, in appropriate Sunday fashion.

"Très beau," added Paulin and myself.

"Why did you choose the parable of the field of wheat and cockle growing together?" asked Stéphanie

"Because it was the gospel of the day," rejoined the Curé.

"Do you know, Monsieur l'Abbé, that I have to confess to you a peccadillo which your very text made me commit," continued Stéphanie.

"Et quelle était donc cette faute, mademoiselle?"

"Inattention to the sermon, from too much engrossment in another train of thought which it suggested."

"What's that?"

"The co-existence of evil with good, the influence of evil over good, and the curious and

remarkable fact that all the laws of the spiritual order find an equivalent in the physical order."

"This is very deep thought for you, mademoiselle, though I am not surprised, knowing you as I do."

A smile all round followed this remark.

"And how did you come to make this reflection?"

"Why, the very existence of the cockle in the midst of the good wheat suggested the co-existence, which could not be doubted before; and the fact of the existence of evil, and the motives of its existence, led naturally to an analysis of its influence, which, to any observer, must appear greater than that of good. And is it not so? Are we not all of us more prone to evil than to what is right? Is not the very essence of our nature preternaturally disposed to what is bad in preference to what is good?—to obey the dictates of the Evil One rather than the injunctions of the Supreme Good? And don't we find it to be so in the physical world?

Place a bad orange among a number of good ones —the preponderance of the good oranges will not better the rotten one, but the single bad one will affect all the good ones. Put a spoonful of any bitter liquid into a glass containing anything which may be sweet—the bitterness will not turn into sweetness, but that which was sweet will turn into that which is bitter. Starting, then, from this fundamental principle, which forms a basis in our double existence, 'au physique et au moral,' it is easy to carry out its purport in all the other laws which regulate our lives. Thus, as in the moral world there is no effect without a cause, so in the physical order there can be no result without a primary motive; as all things are metaphysically linked one into the other, so do they physically form a chain which it requires trouble often to disentangle, but which can be disentangled. As the natural cry of the soul is Excelsior, and its constant desire is to arrive at its final destination by a series of psychological steps, so

in the physical order all is series and gradation. The obstacles which present themselves to the soul which aims at being worthy of its Maker are means of success, and it cannot be doubted that physical obstacles have ever been the means for those who have had courage to conquer them to arrive at celebrity."

"Mademoiselle," observed the Curé, when Stéphanie had paused, "you have given us a charming *exposé* of your views, but you seem merely to have arrived at a conclusion which the doctrines of the Church have long taught, namely, that the natural order is wholly dependent on the supernatural, and the immediate conclusion we are to draw from your arguments is, that human reason is not incompatible with the teaching of the Church. Though, in one sense, you have been asleep during the sermon, yet your sleep has been beneficial, since it was intellectual; but when you first accused yourself of a peccadillo, I feared you were going

to say, like our old friend Jacques, who, misunderstanding the words of Holy Writ he had heard once preached, namely, 'that the Lord giveth sleep to those he loveth,' made them an excuse ever after for not listening to the sermon on Sundays."

After this lively answer, we repaired to the drawing-room, and had our rubber of whist, notwithstanding its being Sunday; and our game was enlivened by music, which Stéphanie played most charmingly, until it was time for M. l'Abbé to retire to his "Cure," followed by M. Paulin, and for ourselves to go to our respective rooms.

Chapter IX.

HEART AND NO HEART—CON AMORE—QUILLEBEUF—AN OLD CUSTOM—TANCARVILLE—PIC-NIC—SHYNESS—FLIRTATION—A BALL—COUSINSHIP.

CHAPTER IX.

AS I left my room I encountered Stéphanie, who appeared somewhat excited, and in a livelier mood even than usual.

"What's up now?" I said to myself. "What is it?" I said to her.

"Well, the programme of the day is rather a fatiguing one," she replied; "but as it is your last day here, and you really will not remain with us any longer, I have accepted invitations to a pic-nic this afternoon, and to a ball this evening. If, however, you prefer shooting (it was the first time she had mentioned the subject at all), the keeper will accompany you to the 'Forêt de Lalonde,' and you may indulge in that sport without fear of being laughed at,

should you miss your birds a hundred times over. We are going to the pic-nic. If you prefer coming with us, say so, and 'tout est dit.'"

It was plain that I had no alternative, and that the offer of a day's shooting in the Forêt de Lalonde, which I understood was full of game, was thrown out as a mere bait to induce me to remain another day, which, by-the-by, I most cordially wished I could have done. My education by this time had received a considerable amount of French polish, and rather than express how much I regretted the impossiblity of availing myself of the opportunity of a day's shooting, I boldly asserted that she could hardly think me so selfish as to wish to gratify myself, when she and her mother were so kind as to put themselves out of the way for me, and that I certainly would go with them to the pic-nic, were each tree of the forest a bird, and were I certain that each aim of my gun would be a true one.

"Well said," answered Stéphanie; "but do not believe that I give you credit for being unselfish. Selfishness is part of a man's nature, which, do what he will, he cannot get rid of."

"How so?"

"Because you are all alike."

"That is no reason; besides, there are numerous exceptions."

"To confirm the rule."

"Like heartlessness in a woman."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that, for every woman one finds with a heart, ninety-nine trifle with it."

"That's simply absurd, because heart is just the cause of her not being wrapt up in herself, as you men are in yourselves."

"Believe me, mademoiselle, that in this point, at least, both countries are alike. In England—and I believe it is the same everywhere—girls lay themselves out to be engaging. They select some

poor wretched individual with feeling—and I call him wretched simply because he does feel—happy the man who does not!—win him by a thousand little ways, of which they, in common with all women, possess the secret—make him believe that his attentions are agreeable, encourage them by all manner of engaging turns and twists of eyes and head, and when matters have reached such a climax that the man is desperately gone—sees, thinks, hears nothing but her—she quietly gives him the cold shoulder, to avoid the burst of passion which she has created and fostered within him, or looks repentant for having gone so far, until she can conveniently throw off the repentant look and begin the same game with another. In France it is even worse; for here this manœuvring is carried on after marriage instead of before. There would seem to be a kind of legitimate right to murder hearts in England—there is not in France."

"You appear to speak very feelingly on the

subject," remarked Stéphanie, most provokingly, "and I am not sure whether selfishness is not again at the bottom of all this. To excuse yourself, you accuse others—'qui s'excuse s'accuse'—and it may be that, if men were not so absurdly foolish as to believe that every woman who smiles upon them must, on that account, be in love with them, they would not be exposed to such just retribution. We are weak, after all, and cannot oppose strength to your persistence in courting our favours; the only remedy we have left to us, therefore, is simply to trust in your getting tired of us; and if you see that we fail to possess that admiration you have voluntarily supposed us to have, it often happens that we get rid on light terms of what we had so lightly conquered. For if you are at all generous, you must allow that a mere smile from a woman is not sufficient reason to tire her with unsolicited attentions. In France we have even less power than the women of your country. Here we are subordinates in almost

every relation between our sex and yours; in England, if I understand rightly, a woman has the privilege of showing her likes and dislikes in a way which, with us, would almost be considered ill-breeding. I allude to the system of cutting your friends, if they happen to displease you. Here we must grin, and bear. Everything, however, has a compensation, and the tact of our countrymen often—indeed, almost always—supplies the want of power in us. But, 'pour en revenir à nos moutons,' believe me, a woman has more heart than a hundred men, and it is right it should be so. Is she not from her birth in a way predestined to bear the sacred character of mother—a character which alone, if nothing else does, stamps her as capable of a love which cannot be equalled by that of the tenderest father, inasmuch as he has not suffered for his love. And I suppose you are aware that the love which has grown out of pain is stronger far than any other love.

'La spina del tormento
Fa delle gioje il fior.'

I will not extend on that subject any longer, for I might make you ashamed of having given expression to such a sentiment."

When she had done, which I had begun to fear she never would do,

"Sensi me totis erubuisse genis,"

and I wished from the bottom of my heart I had been a cow, a horse, or any other dumb animal, rather than the silly biped I stood there before her. There was so much truth in what she had said, so little art in the manner in which she had expressed herself, that, although I knew her arguments lacked depth and solidity, and were not, therefore, unanswerable, yet I remained silent, conscious of having been signally defeated in my attempt to make myself "l'avocat du diable,"—that is, counsel in a bad cause.

As we got into the carriage on our way to Quillebeuf, for which pretty town we were bound,

one of the servants failed to support the old Countess sufficiently, and thus caused her to slip from the carriage step. "Mettez plus de cœur à me servir," was all she said to the negligent footman; and on my admiring her goodness in not making a severer reproach for such real carelessness, she observed,

"All faults are more or less the result of indifference; all things, however small, should be done *con amore;* and if so performed, they must be well done. In recommending my footman, therefore, to have more heart in the performance of his duty, I have satisfied myself and him too, for I have pointed reproachfully to his not taking sufficient care of me, since he failed to evince that interest in my person which he was bound to take."

This little remark, trivial as it may appear, pointed, nevertheless, to a very curious trait in French households, such as that of which I am writing. Each member of the household is made

to feel a kind of personal interest in the house, to believe himself a member of the family on whom he depends, to establish himself as a kind of body-guard, in return for the protection which is afforded him. Hence a great "union de famille," or, better, a strong "esprit de corps," which one vainly seeks in more modern homes; and "a fortiori" among that abominable powdered race of impudent rascals we term flunkeys, and feed up to honour our halls by their affected appearance.

We were not long in reaching Quillebeuf, a little town, uninteresting in itself, but which was once strongly fortified. Henry IV. attached much value to the strategical importance of this place, which, for some time, was denominated Henriqueville; but two years after his death Marie de'Medici ordered the entire demolition of the fortifications. In 1616, the Marshal d'Ancre essayed in vain to have them rebuilt. The Parliament prevented it; and what had been begun, was completely demolished in 1622.

Quillebeuf, situated as it is at the first serious curve which is formed by the Seine, necessitates the constant attendance of pilots, whose duty is to watch the shiftings of the sandbanks, the variations of the currents, to note the rocks and permanent banks which abound, and to guide through these numerous obstacles such vessels as attempt the passage. It is a curious fact that, from the earliest times down to the present day, there have always been an actual number of ninety-nine pilots residing in this town, and that never yet, for what reason no one knows, has this number reached one hundred.

The Quillebois people form one extensive family, and it appears to be customary among them, as soon as a young man has chosen a girl to be his wife, for the girl to keep the young man's house for him before marriage, and to be in all respects his wife, before even the Church has sanctioned the union.

One of the ninety-nine pilots ferried us across

to Tancarville, where the ruins of the old castle present one with a very picturesque tableau. I almost wished it was evening, so as to gaze on these venerable castellated remains under the chastening influence of moonlight, the most exquisite of all mediums for surveying a romantic ruin of the days that are past!

Tancarville formerly belonged to the Norman barons of that name, born of royal blood, and hereditary chamberlains to the Dukes of Normandy. They earned great reputation by their military exploits, but a set of more unruly, passionate subjects no sovereign could well desire. They were for ever at war with their neighbours, whose property they plundered; and one great dispute, which arose between a Sire de Tancarville and le Sire d'Harcourt, on account of a mill, the possession of which they both sought, had to be settled by the Kings of England and of Navarre, in order to prevent further bloodshed.

On reaching this place, we found that the company had arrived, and the various delicacies, of which we were to partake, were already mostly spread out on the grass at the foot of the hill, upon which stand the grim and grey remains of the Château de Tancarville. Footmen in livery, and servants of all kinds, were busy unpacking the remaining dishes, and the implements of warfare by the help of which we were going to destroy the ducks, chickens, snipes, and red-legged partridges, of which there was a most imposing array.

Under the shade of some trees, a party of about twenty girls were indulging in reminiscences of their childhood, by dancing one after the other to every tune they had learnt in the nursery. A few little boys were permitted to join in these frolics, and when they had danced

"A la tour d'Avignon,

. . . . . .

Tout en rond,"

these little urchins became the heroes of the *fête*. They were taken possession of by the young ladies, and kissed and caressed (however ugly they might be), and told that they were "des anges, des petits bijoux, des petits amours." Then, as if no one was present, these grown-up girls rebegan their shouts. Their mirth appeared to know no bounds; they screamed, they laughed, they talked, and the only signs they gave of being aware that others were present, were occasional glances, promptly checked, to the right, where some two dozen men, decked out in the most elaborate and killing get-ups imaginable, had taken up a position to look at the young ladies, and appeared at the distance like so many mushrooms in a field.

On the left another party had gathered, and from the busy appearance of the ladies engaged —some stitching, others sewing, some knitting, and others resting with their hands on their knees—it was plain that the circle was mostly

made up of elderly matrons, whose pride was to gaze on their graceful progenies treading on the light fantastic toe, and whose hopes extended to the other side, where some juvenile duke, marquis, or count might be imbibing the first drops of that nectar or poison (for both names are equally good and applicable)—love.

The fête was given by the Marquise de N——, a great friend of my hostess, who duly presented me to her; and I had scarcely made my bow, when a bland-mannered youth of about eighteen came up, and was introduced to me as the son of the Marquise. After taking off our hat two or three times to each other, he led me to where the other men were. They all rose as I came up, uncovered in the politest manner, and made themselves as agreeable as one could have wished. This unanimous kindness of reception on the part of young men with whom I could not have any sympathies except of age, struck me the more when I considered how different the reception of one of

them amongst us in England would have been under similar circumstances. The fact is that shyness is our social defect, as pride is our national vice; and the sort of sullen, cross-grained look which English young men put on before their equals in age, with whom they are not thoroughly acquainted, is merely the result of the consciousness that they are too shy to put a stranger at his ease by being easy themselves.

What forms the charm of foreign manners, irrespective of any serious defects of character with which we may reproach foreigners, is an easiness of demeanour, manner, and speech which knows no distinctions, and which, to say the very least, is most agreeable.

After the men had talked and smoked for an hour more, during which time the women worked, and the girls danced, the Marquise de N—— got up, and we all went in a body to the place where luncheon was laid out. The ladies sat down, the servants withdrew, and the men

transformed themselves into valets, butlers, footmen, or grooms, each selecting two or three ladies on whom to dance attendance; all carving, helping, pouring water into "vin ordinaire," cracking jokes, making puns, and attacking each other for the amusement of the ladies; striving to be witty in some instances, being naturally so in others; deferential in their manner to the girls, respectful to the older portion of the party, and familiar with the younger married ladies. The servants behind were bobbing their heads to one another, and pointing to the dexterity and awkwardness of their successors, mingling their loud laughter with our peals of merriment, which at every moment was becoming greater. The children were excited, and began to think themselves dishes. The girls had their attention absorbed in the vain task of preventing "le petit de Monges et la petite Despertuis" (family names of the aforesaid urchins) from running over the plates in search of a pear, an orange, or some other esculent. The married

women shuddered with horror at the sight of these little "marmots" on the point of bruising their delicate and tender shins; the older people, whilst remonstrating, laughed heartily at the youthful gambols of these little creatures, and the men encouraged them. In point of fact, I arrived at the conclusion that children at a pic-nic are of paramount importance, inasmuch as they facilitate pleasure by appearing to engross complete attention.

The repast over, the pic-nic was at an end, and we all made for our carriages. When we had recrossed the Seine, and were fairly on our return home, I ventured to remark to the old Countess how strange it appeared to me that flirtations on the Continent were confined entirely to the newly-married people. The only answer I received was—

"C'est un méchant métier que celui de médire;
A l'auteur qui l'embrasse il est toujours fatal:
Le mal qu'on dit d'autrui ne produit que du mal."

"Really, chère madame," I replied, "this is

unkind, for I intended no offence in what I said; and, to tell you the truth, I had some idea of following Boileau's precept in the line which precedes immediately those you have quoted—

'Muse, changeons de style, et quittons la satire.'

All I intended to convey was that the system of not allowing girls to talk with men until they are married, seems to me unproductive of good—'puis qu'elles s'en dédommagent amplement après."

"'C'est l'habitude du pays, et l'on ne peut y redire.' If we were to give our daughters the same liberty as you give them in England, there is no telling where the evil would stop—for French natures are fiery to a degree, and easily led. Accustomed to surveillance from their earliest age, they cannot breathe liberty without abusing it, they cannot measure their actions with their freedom; the proof you have in the very remark you have made. But if we were to extend to unmarried girls that liberty of speech and manner which

marriage gives them, there would never be an end to the evil such a system would entail. Your educational system differs entirely from ours, but being founded on the character of the people, as, in its turn, the national character is influenced by the education received, it cannot be applied to us without producing harm, since it is in no way connected with our character. As, therefore, you seemed to speak of our married women in a disparaging light, I took the liberty of an old friend, and quoted lines which better expressed my thoughts than I could have done so myself."

The reader will judge whether the reproach was merited or not, but he cannot deny that the taunt I had made elucidated an explanation which was so far satisfactory, as to leave no doubt of its truth.

After dinner I proceeded alone to the ball at La Comtesse de O——, which, I had been told, must be good, if at all like those she had given at different times. The drive to the house was short,

and my arrival there early—two blessings of which I fully appreciated the merits; for is there any possible pleasure in the expectation of a twelve miles drive to a ball, which is to be prolonged into the small hours of morning, with a knowledge that those twelve miles are to be performed again before it is possible to rest one's wearied limbs, and "retremper ses forces dans un sommeil paisible?"

The house I alighted at was an elegant modern structure, fitted up with all the luxury of a palace. Twenty footmen, in most gorgeous liveries of red and gold, headed by two "intendants" with cocked hats and mace, stood in a row at the bottom of a royal marble staircase of forty steps, ten feet wide each. The walls were of red marble, enriched by a magnificent Gobelin piece of tapestry, fixed to the wall by a frame of the same marble. On the first landing ten butlers showed the way to an ante-room hung with green silk, ornamented with gold borders, and reflected

two or three times over by numerous Venetian glasses placed opposite one another.

After having given the proper push to the hair, and adjusted the dresses, the company were announced by the two principal butlers to the lady of the house, who received her guests in the first drawing-room. Next to her stood her husband and eldest son, to all three of whom each guest made an appropriate bow.

This drawing-room led into five others in succession, all hung alike with the richest gold-bordered damask silk and furniture to match. Each drawing-room led by folding-doors into the ball-room, a splendid gallery made to represent a flower-garden. The ceiling represented the sky, and the chandeliers which hung from it were so placed that they were reflected in the Venetian mirrors, and thus doubled and trebled the size of the room.

After admiring again and again the magnificence of the whole, and while wondering where the most

essential ingredient in the composition of a ball had been located, viz., the orchestra, a curtain painted with flowers and herbs to match the real ones at its foot, opened and displayed the musicians to view. Enveloped in a kind of shrubbery, at the back of which there was an immense glass, corresponding to one at the other end of the gallery, they were reflected so many times as to force upon the looker-on the illusive impression that their number was legion.

All round the ball-room there were two rows of red "banquettes," on the first of which sat all the young ladies, and on the second their *chaperons*. The perfect taste of the dresses, the simplicity of the *coiffures*, the absence of jewelry in the youthful portion of the ladies, contrasted charmingly with the heavy silks and profuse diamonds of their elders.

Unlike English ball-rooms, where one is sure to find beauties far handsomer than the flowers with which they are bedecked, there was

a singular absence of good looks on the present occasion, and girls who in England would have been thought plain, were here considered beautiful.

The men stood in a cluster at the entrance to the ball-room. awaiting the signal for asking the ladies to dance. The initiated lounged about the drawing-rooms, flirting in true style with the young married women, whose husbands did the same in other quarters. The old ladies were instructing their charges to accept only such as might enter with success "la lice matrimoniale."

It is a rule almost entirely disused now in Paris, but still kept up in the country and in the old circles, that, if invited to a house, you may presume to speak to any one you meet there, on the polite principle that you are never asked to meet but equals. This gives the stranger or beginner a chance of making acquaintances, and, if desirable, such acquaintances into future friendships.

Believing myself entitled to put the rule into practice, and knowing, as I did, so very few people, as soon as the band struck up the leading notes of a quadrille, I proceeded in quest of a partner. Next to a little person in pink, whom I knew, sat a tall, handsomely-made young lady, whom I thought, by contrast, the belle of the ball. To dance with her forthwith became my ambition, "ce désir insatiable de s'élever audessus, et sur les ruines mêmes des autres," as Fénélon defines that passion; and whilst I was making my way towards her, somewhat uncertain as to the propriety of asking one I did not know, before her neighbour, with whom I was acquainted, a little circumstance occurred, which soon settled my mind on that point. Behind me, and coming in the same direction, I recognized the Marquis de N——, whose mother had feasted us at a pic-nic in the morning; and hastening lest he should carry away my prize, I happened to observe the manœuvres of "she-in-pink's" mother, when she pulled her daugh-

ter's sash rather quickly to the left, in token of the Marquis coming on that side. I knew then how matters stood. I immediately asked her to dance, knowing that she would refuse me, which she did, and appealing to her tall neighbour, I not only had the satisfaction of being accepted, but likewise that of seeing the young Marquis make the "pink people" a most exquisite bow, and speak to their other neighbour. So much for the success of manœuvering *chaperons* on that occasion.

My partner appeared to be something between twenty and twenty-one years of age, and from her conversation I gathered a good deal of "temperature" intelligence, and extracted the fact that this was her fourth year of "going out!"

"J'éspère, mademoiselle," I said, "que vers la fin de la soirée vous m'accorderez une valse."

"Non, monsieur, non," she replied, with unmitigated affectation. "Ma mère dit que je suis encore trop jeune."

Too young to waltz!—who ever heard of such

a thing? Her mother said that she was too young at twenty-two to indulge in such profane whirligigs. The idea was too good, and it required more than ordinary self-control to check the burst of laughter in which I would fain have indulged at that moment. It is because of such like "bétises" that Frenchmen dread so much a "bal de jeunes filles." In Paris the "bals de jeunes femmes" are always the most "recherchés," and those of "jeunnes filles" generally confined to relations.

I remember on one occasion being at a young ladies' ball at the Hôtel de M——, where some two hundred and fifty people had congregated, every man and woman of whom styled each other "mon cousin," "ma cousine." The host came up to me and graciously informed me that we were cousins, he and I, because "les liens de l'amitié sont cousins germains des liens de la parenté!"

There may be great objections to cousinship on a large scale, and no doubt these objections in many

instances are well-founded; but that feeling almost of hatred which in England alone—for it is not so in Scotland, nor in Ireland, nor all the world over—we entertain for relations, is based on an innate selfishness which proscribes any claim to one's attention except that of personal welfare, and on a keen jealousy of each other's success.

"L'esprit de famille," which throughout the world links a number of individuals together by ties of blood, love, and devotion, does not exist in our country. Here we have as many families as there are individuals in each. "Chacun pour soi, et Dieu pour tous," should be our national device, if mottoes were always founded on facts. There no doubt exist many dissensions in foreign homes, but in no country, except in ours, does it appear to be a common practice for elders to endeavour to crush in its growth the bud they have helped to form.

As in English ball-rooms, there was a great deal of stupid talk; and, indeed, he must be possessed of a most uncommon mind who can con-

verse agreeably, and generate ideas in the midst of a furnace, enlivened with the sound of trumpets, violincellos, and the constant jabbering murmurs which surround him.

To one of these conversations, I, however, listened with attention. It was held by a young man and a rather pretty damsel, the one evidently not "l'inventeur de la poudre," nor the other likely to "set the Thames on fire;" but the reader will observe that it is identical with what generally goes on in our own balls:

Young Man.—"Quelle jolie robe vous avez-là, Mademoiselle."

It was perfectly simple, and of a most ordinary cut.

Young Lady.—"Vous êtes bien bon" (a smile).

Y. M.—"Qui vous l'a faite?"

Y. L.—"La couturière."

Y. M. (distractedly).—"Vraiment!"

Y. L (busy).—"C'est à vous à faire l'avant deux."

Y. M. (quickly).—"Ah, mon Dieu! je m'oublie!"

Y. L. (inquiringly). — "Retournez-vous prochainement à Paris?"

Y. M.—"J'en viens." (evidently a settled speech.)

Y. L.—"Il doit y faire bien triste."

Y. M.—"Très triste!"

Y. L. (absorbed).—"Ah!"

Y. M. (ditto).—"Oui."

Y. L.—"C'est fini."

Y. M.—"Quel dommage!"

Y. L.—"Veuillez me reconduire."

Y. M.—"Volontiers."

A magnificent supper "assis' finished the evening; and, having some way to travel the next morning, I left the ball at an early hour, on my way back to the Landin.

Chapter X.

REGRET—"CŒUR" *v.* "HEART"—"DIABLE"—FAREWELL—GRATITUDE—MRS. SNOOK OF POPLAR—COMPANIONS—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER X.

HOW naturally does a short "séjour" in almost any place endear its recollection when you are forced to leave it!—and what an ill-omened word is departure—that word which, like the blight of lingering winter on the first flowers of spring, severs your affections from the places where they had just begun to take root!

On waking, I experienced a "serrement de cœur" such as I have rarely yielded to. The hour had arrived when I was in good earnest to begin retracing my way home, and leave the sunny atmosphere of "la belle Normandie" for a dreary northern winter, when the illusions of happiness which had possessed my imagination were to be dispelled roughly by the realistic

notions of English life. Half dreaming, half conscious, I heard the gentle knock at my door; and, as if the old butler had guessed the sorrow I was experiencing at the thought of having to leave a place where I had met with so much attention and such genuine kindness, he addressed me in a tone which seemed to denote sympathy—

"Je le vois bien," he said. "Monsieur, like all those who have ever stayed here, is loath to leave; and no wonder. But Monsieur will return soon, and he will have the double pleasure of re-visiting a place he has liked, and of witnessing the improvements which have been made."

"How good of you, Joseph, to speak so feelingly; and how truly you express my thoughts," I answered; "but I fear my return is very problematical, and this doubt forbids my adieu being cheered by hope."

"Ah! monsieur, les cœurs qui s'aiment se rapprochent toujours."

Here, by one of those peculiar psychological revolutions which are unaccountable, my engrossment in the subject we were talking about suddenly ceased, and my thoughts were henceforth intent on the curious anomaly which exists in some words of both languages. Now, the word "cœur," which the old butler had just pronounced, did not sound absurd in his mouth; and no one would deny that the monosyllable "heart" would have appeared absolutely ridiculous on corresponding English lips. Light as we admit a French heart to be, trivial as its feelings may appear, we bear with the word when pronounced by foreigners—a forbearance which by no means implies compulsion; and we seldom can control our impatience when its equivalent is expressed in our native tongue. Heart sounds twangy, humbugging in English; it preserves its real significance in French. On the other hand, the word devil—and I hope I may not be called profane for recalling a Scriptural character—maintains in English its

real, *bona fide* evil meaning; in French, by what system of deduction I know not, it has lost that horrifying significance which, designating as it does the Evil Spirit, it should have preserved. "C'est un diable" means simply that the man so designated is up to any amount of mischief, but does not necessarily imply that he is vicious; which the English, "he's a devil," would very certainly do. In fact, the French have all kinds of pretty diminutives of the word, and rival the Germans, who are said to be the only nation who can speak amiably of his Satanic Majesty. "Un diablotin," "une diablerie," "une diabloterie," are as delicate little conversational expressions as can be found in any language; and Hoffman himself must have envied at times their witty interpolation.

I would have prolonged my meditation for some time longer, had I not been warned by the faithful Joseph that unless I made great haste it would be impossible for me to catch the coach at Bourg-

Achard. How I wished that I could miss it! and yet how I dreaded missing it! I was full of fear and hope combined; and the result was a most uncomfortable state of mind, which would have been rendered infinitely more so still, had I failed to bring my intended departure to execution.

It is a general rule that when impelled by necessity, or other causes, to leave any place to which one is much attached, and that through preconcerted or natural negligence one fails to leave the place at the time appointed, all interest in it vanishes, and makes room for mental discomfort only. Certain it is that on the morning in question, hateful as the idea of leaving was to me, and much as I wished to prolong my stay, Joseph's intimation that I might be too late gave me an energy of which I should not have thought myself capable. To dress, pack up, and revisit for the last time (as if mute humanity were capable of understanding my regrets and the adieux I bid them) all my favourite haunts, was merely the

work of a moment; and punctually, as our dear little conveyance made its last appearance at the door, I made mine at the foot of the staircase, "armé de cap-à-pié pour mon voyage."

Early as it was, I found the old Countess there to bid me farewell; and whatever adherence to fashion I may have followed when I kissed her hand on arrival, very different sentiments actuated me on my departure. I pressed her aged hand respectfully to my lips with a feeling of affection mingled with regret, which could not come but from the inmost recess of the soul.

Long acquaintances are very unnecessary to strong friendships, and I felt that there was a much stronger tie between this family and myself than there perhaps had been with people I had known for longer time, and whom I had had many more opportunities of appreciating. It is true she had known my parents before she had known me, but friendships do

not always descend as heirlooms, and no man can be insensible to kindness when it is shown him "ipsius causa."

Gratitude may, as Walpole says, be "a lively sense of future favours" at a time when already the realities of life have battled effectually against the illusions of youth; but there will ever exist, whatever efforts may be made to destroy it, a lurking affection in the heart of man for those who have shown him kindness and attention at an age when he could not be expected to return it. The slightest little attentions paid us when children come back to our memory with delight as we grow up; and with the sigh which proclaims that they are past, there is wafted at the same time in the air a blessing on the one who has caused the recollection.

Faithful to the last to her mission of guide, Stéphanie entered the vehicle with me, and a moment after my visit to the old French châ-

teau was an event of the past—a happy dream, on which for many a day I was destined to dwell and to meditate.

At Bourg-Achard we found the coach, and bade each other farewell. Having secured the coupé the day before, I had the satisfaction of being left to my sole thoughts for the remainder of the journey by road to Rouen, a journey less pleasant or picturesque than by the boat, but one which, not having travelled by it before, might, I thought, under the circumstances, prove a distraction.

At Rouen I made the best of my way to the Abbé's house; and as if I was destined always to find him at table, I arrived just as he was sitting down to a four o'clock dinner. Of course he asked me to taste his excellent "ordinaire," and to share his "pot au feu;" and again my weak nature gave way, though hunger I had none, the state of the weather being such as to forbid it. The thermometer was at blood heat, yet I mechanically sat

down, and on the whole played my part very well; Marie's charming way of serving helping me considerably to taste what she served, and "l'appetit venant en mangeant," in proof of the truth of the old French saying.

In the midst of the repast, an English penitent of the Abbé's, a resident at Rouen, one Mrs. Snook of Poplar, rushed in, "all frowsed and blowsed," and sat down by me, eagerly calling for food. The very appearance of the woman was enough to disgust one at being her countryman; but let the unbiassed reader picture to himself the various conflicting feelings that convulsed me, when she opened her mouth to monopolise the conversation by a noisy history of her teeth. When, in a tone of Billingsgate pathos, she had related her "long and severe sufferings from the tooth-ache" —how she had ineffectually used every possible remedy on this mortal earth—how she had at length mustered courage to submit to having the

tooth extracted—how she had sent for a surgeon—how he had arrived, and how, when it came to the pull and the push, she could not resign herself to it, I could stand it no longer and bade the hospitable Curé good-bye. In a few hours more I found myself and luggage deposited on board the "Seine" steamer, bound from Havre to Southampton.

There were on board the steam-packet three gentlemanlike young Englishmen, an old Scotchman in a brown wig, two or three English women—one of them very pretty—two German ladies, a Norwegian family on a tour, and a French gentleman in a straw hat. This somewhat varied collection constituted pretty nearly the sum total of passengers.

After much of the confusion peculiarly incident to embarkation, we departed at 6 A.M., and made a majestic "sortie" out of Havre harbour. Though, comparatively with my former experience of the sea which I was going to re-cross,

I found the passage perfectly calm, still the occasional walking up and down to observe what was passing, in which I indulged, ended always in a compulsory return to the horizontal position I had taken up on a bench.

The Norwegians, consisting of a bluff old personage in a blue suit, with blunt spurs, good-humoured, self-contented physiognomy, and grey hair; his two sons, fine grown lads of about twenty-six or twenty-seven, one of them having a would-be ferocious pair of moustaches, and a servant, maintained an incessant flow of conversation, of which, of course, no one besides themselves could comprehend a word. The English ladies sat on deck, rather apprehensive of moving about; the German ones were, I believe, somewhere in the cabin. The French gentleman in the straw hat was sprawling on a bench in a truly deplorable state of artificial emaciation. By-the-by, about this personage I had nearly forgotten to mention a "trait" that

amused me. To be so too, the reader must fancy a long-backed, grim-looking wight, whose visage, naturally of a most ill-favoured cast, was rendered still more unsightly by the devastations of small-pox. When he first entered the packet at Havre, it was in company with a middle-aged gentleman, who seemed anxious to introduce his charming protégé to the notice of the passengers. I happened to speak a few words with this personage, who took the opportunity of calling my attention to the young French traveller.

"Voilà," said he, "un monsieur qui n'a jamais été en Angleterre, et ne sait pas un mot d'Anglais."

I coolly expressed my surprise at the rash folly of such a voyage.

"Ce n'est rien," added he. "De Inglish ladees veel be too happay to teesh him."

There was a degree of assurance in this speech that was irresistibly ludicrous, especially

when one turned one's eyes towards the miserable-looking anatomy who was to become the chosen pupil and "enfant gâté" of the English ladies.

There was, besides, a pretty little American, with whom I got into conversation, and in whom I discovered that curious combination of fashion and dowdiness, refinement and vulgarity, exalted patriotism and contempt for other countries, which I had so often read of. Her little figure was decked out in the extreme of Parisian "ton," and remarkably short petticoats placed in piquant relief a pair of beautiful little feet. A profusion of auburn hair, a fair transparent complexion, and sharp lively features, with a *tournure* more *petite* than elegant, completed the external notabilia of the Yankee representative on board the "Seine."

Her conversation was not deficient in cleverness and variety, though more or less interlarded with bombastic Americanisms. Thus, one

person was a "fellow of magnificent talents—splendid mind—most elegant mental abilities;" and each favoured transatlantic acquaintance of whom she discoursed was honoured with similar epithets of hyperbolical commendation.

About 4 P.M. we sighted the Needles, and shortly after we all set foot on English soil. My voyage was at an end:

"Nec quæ præteriit hora redire potest."

THE END.

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